United Nations S/PV.7924

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7924th meeting
Thursday, 13 April 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2017/223)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-10037 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2017/223)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Brazil to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/313, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/223, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2350 (2017).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wecome the adoption of resolution 2350 (2017), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for a period of six months, concluding in October. It has been 13 years since we first established the MINUSTAH mandate. We welcome the fact that responsibilities will be transferred to a new mission whose main role will be strengthening the capacities of national institutions in Haiti in such a way that the Government will be in a position to fully shoulder its own responsibilities after the transition.

Against that backdrop, we voted in favour of the resolution to express our support for the Government and people of Haiti and in order to ensure that the country can continue to make progress towards lasting peace. We see the country as being ready to make progress after the various success stories that we have seen in terms of political stability. We would point in particular to the presidential elections and the end of the transitional phase.

On that particular point, we support the establishment of the future mission, which will be in a position to support the Government on the basis of the three responsibilities enshrined in paragraph 6 we just adopted. The mission will, of course, not assume those responsibilities directly but support the Government therein. We therefore supported the resolution because we believe that the mandate of the upcoming mission will not undermine the efforts of human rights organizations of the United Nations working in Hiati. We welcome the fact that there will be no overlap. We must always be careful to ensure that the Security Council's resolutions do not have an adverse impact on the work of other United Nations agencies and bodies or the mandates granted by other bodies, such as the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

Troop-contributing countries (TCCs) are working to serve the cause of peace and security. We want to make that point very clear. The capacity of troops needs to be strengthened, and we need to plug any gaps that might have an adverse impact on the way they function. Such steps must be part of triangular cooperation between the TCCs, the Security Council amd the Secretariat. All of these aspects must be borne in mind and duly studied and analysed within the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations as well, and not just here.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay): Uruguay voted in favour of resolution 2350 (2017) on the basis of our belief that this is the best way to support the continued transition going forward in Haiti.

The new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti will focus on three key areas: the rule of law, security and human rights. With the extension of the current mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) until

October, we will be able to draw to a close a very successful United Nations peacekeeping operation. For the past 13 years and under the leadership Brazil, MINUSTAH has played an intense role in difficult circumstances — complicated at the outset by natural factors, such as the earthquake of 2010 and last year's hurricane — and has always fulfilled its functions. We also underscore the importance of the new Mission's ongoing cooperation and assistance so that Haiti can achieve sustainable development.

We also reiterate our congratulations and best wishes to the people and the Government of Haiti, which Uruguay, as a friendly country, has supported throughout every stage. We reiterate our support for Brazil and the work of Ms. Sandra Honoré, as well as to all the men and women who have participated and will continue to participate in MINUSTAH as it completes his mandate professionally and responsibly.

At the same time, we are grateful for all the cooperation we have enjoyed from the Group of Friends of Haiti throughout the years. I would like to make it clear that in the negotiation process of the resolution, the Group of Friends worked strenuously, as usual, to submit to the Security Council a resolution that enjoyed consensus. However, at the end of the negotiating process within the Group of Friends, language was was introduced into the resolution that had not previously been discussed and that, in the view of many, did not do justice to the outstanding work performed by MINUSTAH for all these years.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation voted in favour of resolution 2350 (2017) because of the importance of the role that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti plays in stabilizing the situation in that country, and because there is a need to continue extending assistance to the Government of Haiti. At the same time, we would like to offer some comments on the content of the resolution and the working methods of the Council.

We note that there is a discrepancy, on the one hand, between the documents submitted and the nature of our recent discussions over the situation in Haiti and, on the other, the statements made by the author of the resolution and those who supported it. It will be recalled that on 6 April, the Council came together in order to assess the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations (see S/PV.7918). Over the course of that meeting, the United States delegation, which initiated the meeting, stated that there was a need to go back to basics in peacekeeping and make sure that we prevent an uncontrolled bloating of mandates. The delegations and the Secretariat said that it was important to make sure that applicable mandates were made understandable, clear and attainable. However, those ideas are not reflected in the documents submitted. The mandate of the mission is not clear. On one hand, the Mission is to carry out the monitoring of human rights either by itself or by helping the Government to do so. On the other hand, it is stated that the decision was made by the Council in line with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which implies the use of force. We do not understand how, in principle, this could be implemented in practice.

In the course of working on the draft resolution, we heard objections. People said that the previous mission also worked on the basis of Chapter VII, but let us take a careful look. Its use had been very clearly limited exclusively to issues having to do with maintaining security. So, the question arises: how did the situation in the country change? Is it that the penholders and those who supported the resolution within the Council are so convinced that, against the backdrop of a gneral improvement of the situation in Haiti, the situation violations of human rights has, contrarily, become a threat to international peace and security? That would be the only case in which this situation could become a subject for consideration for the Security Council.

Let me recall that the Blue Helmets are in Haiti because of issues having nothing to do with human rights. The same logic also applies to the Secretariat's good offices. A question here is: to what extent are they good if this is something that falls under Chapter 7 of the Charter? What is most surprising is that these requests are being made against a background of basic stabilization in Haiti, which is exactly what allowed us to consider the drawdown and changing the format of the presence of the United Nations in the country. Literally two days ago, on 11 April (see S/PV.7920), we discussed the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Haiti (S/2017/223). Basically all those who spoke then, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré and most members of the Council, noted that a peaceful transfer of power had taken place and that there was an improvement in the security situation. They also noted that it was exactly

these positive developments that enabled us to consider the issue of reviewing the mandate of the mission.

During the discussion of the draft statement, we also heard that a robust mandate was necessary to supposedly maintain the levers of influence over the Government. We are not convinced that in this situation we need to be talking about exerting influence or pressure, especially since we are talking about the Mission's success, which will enable us to close it in six months. We think that in this context what we need to be stressing is interaction and cooperation with the host country, especially since there is a clear prospect that the situation will normalize. Unfortunately, we cannot confidently say that the text submitted was the outcome of the work done by the Group of Fiends of Haiti, and not only because the version adopted differs from the version agreed in that format, but also because of the criticism made by members of the Group about the decision-making process within that informal body.

Mr. Fernández Revollo (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, we would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting this morning. We would also like to pay tribute to the hard work of the Group of Friends of Haiti, as they participated in the drawing up of the text of resolution 2350 (2017). We also thank the members of the Security Council for having adopted the resolution.

Bolivia would like to reiterate its commitment to the bright present and future of the Republic of Haiti. We believe that the international community needs to work as one in order to support the economic development of Haiti and to ensure the stability of this brother country. We would like to underscore the point that the international community's efforts need to be pursued in close coordination and cooperation with the Haitian Government and the authorities within the country, always taking their priorities into account. Our support for them must fully respect their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

In line with the position expressed by the representative of Haiti, we would like to echo the welcome to all that has been achieved in terms of security and stability. Many of these achievements will pave the way for a period of transition that will, in time, allow the Haitian National Police to increasingly assume full responsibility for the policing responsibilities in their country. We support the Haitian statement with respect to the convergence of opinion between Haiti and the United Nations with regard to the orderly drawdown and withdrawal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We hope that the new mission, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, which will replace MINUSTAH, will continue to work in close partnership with the national security forces in Haiti, contributing to the full implementation of the rule of law within Haiti and the upholding of human rights, in line with the recommendations outlined in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/223) and fully commensurate with the needs and priorities set by the Government and people of Haiti.

In the same vein, we believe that the Security Council must continue to regularly assess the situation on the ground in Haiti. It is for that reason that, as we have previously announced, it is Bolivia's intention, under our presidency in June, to carry out a visit of the Security Council to Haiti as a demonstration of our ongoing interest in that country and continue to work with it. That visit will enable us to receive information first hand from the authorities in Haiti and to see for ourselves the process of drawing down MINUSTAH and the planning of a transition between MINUSTAH and its replacement mission. We believe that a visit in June will be the perfect opportunity to assess the situation on the ground. The visit will partially be to see how the Security Council can further contribute to the stabilization of Haiti over the long-term and how we can work with the people of Haiti to deliver development for the country.

In order to achieve that overall purpose, we would like to underscore the importance of cooperation between the new mission and the country team of the United Nations. All of the aforementioned elements can make a valuable contribution to the pre-planning for the new mission that the Secretary-General will establish. The Security Council's visit will be important for our understanding of the new mission and our understanding of what the elements of that mission need to be, all in order to ensure that everybody is speaking with one voice and acting in concert. We need to have a proper understanding of the needs of the State in the current reality so that we could probably assist and design the *replacement mission* appropriately.

We would like to echo the words of the Chair of the Group of Friends of Haiti, the representative of Uruguay, particularly with respect to the language used in paragraph 18, which is borrowed from a resolution on another mission and thus reflects an entirely different

reality from that in Haiti. That sews doubt over what has been happening in Haiti. We would like to make the point that paragraph 18 in no way reflects the reality on the ground in Haiti. It casts aspersions on the actions of MINUSTAH's troops and police and in no way reflects their behaviour. Bolivia has participated in MINUSTAH in a professional and dedicated manner. We enjoy the appreciation and recognition of the Haitian people, which we are proud of.

We believe that the reference to Chapter VII in the resolution in this particular instance does not properly reflect the reality in the country. Similarly, the idea of simply standardizing paragraphs for all Security Council resolutions pertaining to peacekeeping operations is neither workable nor beneficial to missions or to the work of the Security Council. We cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach to all peacekeeping operations. They will have their differences. Each reality and each set of circumstances are different. We must tailor the language of resolutions to those different realities.

In the new era in which Haiti finds itself, Bolivia would like to reiterate its commitment to its Haitian brothers and sisters as they seek to develop a stable democracy and sustainable development. We will work together with the Security Council and the entire United Nations in order to continue that support.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2350 (2017), which closes the Mission in six months and establishes a new successor mission, which will deal with issues related to police, rule of law and human rights, in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General. This is an important decision, and we welcome the fact that the Council adopted the resolution unanimously.

Thirteen years having passed since the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established, it was time to register the success achieved by the Mission in terms of stabilizing Haiti, and to move toward a new type of United Nations presence, one more tailored to the needs of the country and the conditions on the ground, which have evolved considerably and in a positive direction.

The work carried out by MINUSTAH in recent years will enable us to get Haiti out of the emergency situation in which it found itself until recently, by restoring a climate of relative security, participating in reconstruction efforts after the 2010 earthquake, or contributing to the substantial strengthening of the Haitian National Police — the increase in authority of which is a token of stability for the country. Much of the credit is due to the United Nations and the Council, but also to the troop-contributing countries, without which the Mission would have been unable to play its role.

The new operation, which will begin in October, is to consolidate the advances already made by making the Haitian National Police an autonomous actor. It will also engage in other major projects in the areas of the rule of law, the fight against impunity, increasing the professionalism and the independence of the judiciary, and the establishment of a correctional system that is compatible with the needs of the country and respect for the rights of detainees.

The human rights situation, which remains an area of concern, should also be monitored attentively, and be the object of regular recommendations. We believe that is critical to maintaining an effective and lasting peace, and is therefore inextricably linked to other activities of the next mission.

France has long called on the Council to shoulder its responsibility with regard to the question of Haiti by taking the necessary measures to ensure that the Organization's means of engagement in the country remain, over time, as appropriate and efficient as possible. That was done today and we are quite pleased. However, this new stage does not spell the end of United Nations engagement with Haiti. On the contrary, it demonstrates the ability of the Council to develop, in an ongoing manner, United Nations activity in the field — activity of which the primary concern is to respond in the best possible way to the needs of the people concerned. This new stage also signals the establishment of a more appropriate and more effective tool for the benefit of Haiti and Haitians.

I should like to conclude by also paying tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré, and to the staff of MINUSTAH.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2350 (2017). It is a good demonstration of how the United Nations should be sustaining peace by selecting the right tools at the right time for the right ends. As we argued on Tuesday, the Haiti of today is not the Haiti of 2004. It is a country on a trajectory toward greater stability. Peacekeeping troops performing a stabilization role are no longer the right tool in Haiti.

The resolution bring the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to a close, and I welcome that. We thank all of the troops and all of the troop-contributing countries for their service to MINUSTAH.

The United Nations holds other tools that are required for today's Haiti. United Nations police units are still needed to uphold the security achieved to date, but the primary focus of the United Nations must now be ensuring that the Haitian National Police is able to perform that role itself.

Support for Haiti's security capacities will not alone sustain peace in the country. As history has told us time and time again, it is the rule of law and the protection of human rights, not the capacity to use force that delivers long-term stability. It is welcome that the resolution launches a new peace operation, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), with the appropriate mandate and authorization to advance toward those very ends. Ultimately, however, the new Mission has one overarching objective, which should be to work tirelessly to establish the conditions for its own redundancy. MINUJUSTH should be working toward a careful exit through the phased handover of responsibilities to the Haitian Government and greater reliance on the tools of the United Nations country team. I am glad that an exit plan will be developed from the very start of it deployment.

Haiti is still fragile. It needs the support of the United Nations through a new peace operation in the short term and the use of other United Nations soon after that. We can never have an absolute guarantee of continued stability in any context. The experience of peacekeeping withdrawals in Haiti's recent past loom large. But fear of the worst outcome should not restrain us from pursuing the best, which is a peaceful, just and stable Haiti standing proudly on her own two feet.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy) (*spoke in French*): Italy welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2350 (2017), which marks a critical turning point, moving the focus of United Nations peacekeeping in Haiti from stabilization to institution-building. The unanimity of the Council will ensure that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti will hold firm in the implementation of their mandates. It also demonstrates the consensus within the Security Council on the Haitian question, which is very important at this stage.

My country reaffirms its support for a responsible transition, as set out in the resolution just adopted. We are committed to continue to help Haiti on their path toward a stable and inclusive democracy and lasting peace. With this resolution, the Council establishes a road map that will ensure that the United Nations assistance is appropriate to the current circumstances in Haiti. This is an important stage in the peacekeeping mandate, which will be tailored to the real needs of the country.

Italy welcomes, in particular, the importance attached to human rights, the participation of women and the principle of responsibility, to which we attribute a key role in the ability of Haitian authorities to achieve their objectives, as well as to ensure the credibility of United Nations missions.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2350 (2017). We thank the United States for taking a leading role in the negotiations. Japan voted in favour of the resolution based on the clear progress achieved in Haiti. The Council has a responsibility to adopt mission configurations that match the situation on the ground. The time is right for a responsible transfer of tasks to the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and the United Nations country team.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has significantly contributed to the stabilization of the country over the past 13 years, and we commend the men and women who have served there. Haiti has demonstrated ownership of the electoral process. We are also pleased by improvements in the capacity of the Haitian National Police; however, there is still more to do, including with respect to further strengthening its capacity and the rule of law.

With that in mind we have given MINUJUSTH a clear and focused mandate in a planned two-year time frame. We believe this new Mission, together with Haitian ownership, will help to further consolidate the gains achieved by MINUSTAH. The people of Haiti will continue to be Japan's first priority. We will continue to support the consolidation of stability and development in the country going forward.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank the United States delegation, as the penholder, as well as other stakeholders for their efforts with regard to resolution 2350 (2017), which we support.

Kazakhstan fully recognizes the importance of the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to restore and secure a stable environment in Haiti. In the light of the new tasks that have been delegated, we support the transition to a new and integrated Mission focusing on the rule of law, criminal justice, and human rights reforms in the security and other sectors. My delegation welcome the progress made in strengthening stability and democracy, and in restoring constitutional order in the country following the peaceful and orderly elections — which is recognized as a commendable achievement for a country still in transition after facing many setbacks.

The strong engagement of the international community is an obvious necessity for Haiti's sustainable development, with its measures to improve housing, water, education, health care and promote gender equality. Haiti also needs all our support in combating transnational crime. However, this is the beginning of a new era for Haiti. The situation on the ground is still fragile and the Security Council should continue to follow developments in and around the country.

At this stage, the focus of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations and others is on reforming and strengthening State institutions to lay the foundation of stability, first, by implementing the transition plan and building the operational and institutional capacity of the Haitian National Police. Simultaneously, the new mandate, by ensuring law and order, will indirectly support peacebuilding and promote socioeconomic development geared towards a framework of mutual accountability among the Government of Haiti, the United Nations and the international community.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The orderly withdrawal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the concurrent step-up of a smaller successor peacekeeping mission, on the basis of ensuring overall stability in Haiti, is a consensus reached by all Council members and is called for by the current situation. It meets the expectations of all parties. Today's decision can help the Haitian Government to assume its responsibility for maintaining national security and stability. In the light of those considerations, China voted in favour of resolution 2350 (2017).

Meanwhile, we believe that the underlying tenet of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security, which does not involve human rights. We hope that Council members will stay united in supporting MINUSTAH's orderly withdrawal and continue to promote stability and development in Haiti. MINUSTAH has played an important role in maintaining security and stability in Haiti since 2004. China highly commends this development and progress.

As we speak, the situation in Haiti is largely stable. New development opportunities have emerged. We hope that all parties in Haiti will pull together to preserve the current positive momentum and maintain national stability and development. We hope that the new Haitian Government will identify a development path suited and tailored to national conditions without delay, and that the international community, including countries of the region, will continue to contribute to an improved situation in Haiti.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal voted in favour of resolution 2350 (2017) as a further sign of its continued solidarity with the Government and people of Haiti, with whom we share special historical relations. This commitment led to Senegal's deployment of 173 police officers to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In 2010, following the horrific earthquake that struck Haiti, Senegal responded by hosting more than 200 students who were trained in human rights and in gender rights in particular, which ultimately made it possible for this country to manage these issues.

Senegal is therefore pleased to have voted with the other Security Council members to extend MINUSTAH's mandate for a further six months and for the last time with a view to its drawn down on 15 October. We also welcome the establishment of the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti on 16 October to support the Haitian Government as it seeks to strengthen its institutions, particularly in the areas of rule of law, the police force and human rights. Senegal will continue to be a partner of Haiti in those efforts.

On 11 April (see S/PV.7920) I noted here that Haiti was at a crossroads. As we work to restructure MINUSTAH, we appeal to the international community to step up its cooperation in all areas with this country, which, in the eyes of Senegal and Africa, I repeat, is

the first black republic and the first South American democracy. Our appeal was all the more urgent as, in the transition from the newly elected President, the outgoing provisional President said that the vulnerability of Haiti at the environmental, economic and social levels was inexorably deteriorating every day, as 96 per cent of the population was living constantly from the threat of two well-known hazards: drought and floods.

As if response, in his own inauguration address President Jovenel Moïse, the fifty-eighth President of Haiti, said that he would fulfil his campaign promises before the end of his first mandate so that, inter alia, his Government could restore the trust of the Haitian people in the political system and class and in the national elites; reinforce social inclusion and national solidarity; boost the productive sectors of the economy, including tourism, by the domestication of new technologies; and, of course, build a resilient nation able to withstand the natural disasters that frequently strike the country.

That is why Senegal appeals to and commends the Group of Friends of Haiti, chaired by our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Uruguay, to continue to advocate for that country, which still needs the United Nations.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Today's resolution 2350 (2017) brings to a close a Mission that began in 2004 when Haiti was first faced with an armed conflict that had spread to several cities across the country. Accountability and reporting language has been added so that we are able to track the effectiveness of remaining personnel. Two regional hubs will be removed to focus efforts in the areas that need the most support. As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti draws down and the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti gears up, the Haitian people will be set on the path of independence and self-sufficiency. This is a success story when it comes to drawing down a peacekeeping mission.

The United States will continue to stand with the people of Haiti. We have previously noted the contributions of many of the peacekeeping troops in Haiti. While this is seen as a success, unfortunately, it is a nightmare for many in Haiti, who will never be able to forget and live with brutal scars. We must acknowledge the abandoned children, 12-15 years old, who lived every day with hunger. They were lured by peacekeepers with cookies and snacks. The high price of this food was sexual abuse. According to Paisley Dodds of the Associated Press, the children were passed from soldier to soldier. One boy was gang raped in 2011 by peacekeepers, who disgustingly filmed it on a cellphone.

What do we say to those kids? Did these peacekeepers keep them safe? We must acknowledge those realities. How can we learn from those acts? These peacekeepers are sent into vulnerable communities to protect the innocent, not to exploit or rape them. The United States has made it clear to the United Nations and all troop-contributing countries that these abuses must stop. Countries that refuse to hold their soldiers accountable must recognize that this either stops or their troops will go home and their financial compensation will end. The abuses do not represent a troop-contributing country poorly if they hold those abusers accountable and stress this to the soldiers who are in place.

The United States will continue to work closely with Haiti as it makes progress towards security and stability. With the international community, we stand by the Government of Haiti and are committed to the country's democratic development, independence and economic growth. We will, however, continue to push for the accountability of those troops in Haiti, as well as all troop-contributing countries involved in peacekeeping efforts. We owe it the vulnerable in those countries, who desperately need peace and security. I ask Council members to join me in that effort.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Brazil, Chile and Guatamala.

Two days ago (see S/PV.7920), we expressed before the Council our support for the Secretary-General's recommendations on gradually withdrawing the military component of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) until the closure of the Mission on 15 October. We have also supported the proposal to establish a follow-on mission focused on strengthening the rule of law, police development and monitoring human rights in Haiti.

Regrettably, we were surprised, however, to see in resolution 2350 (2017) the last-minute introduction of paragraph 18, which had never been discussed in

the Group of Friends of Haiti. Although we favour accountability in peacekeeping operations, we believe that the content of this paragraph is unnecessary in the current resolution and does not reflect the reality on the ground and the high-level performance of MINUSTAH's troops. During the 13 years of MINUSTAH, there has been no problem at all regarding undeclared caveats, lack of effective command and control, refusal to obey orders, failure to respond to attacks on civilians or inadequate equipment, as paragraph 18 may suggest.

In a moment of review and possibly reform of peacekeeping operations, it is crucial to highlight the importance of tailored approaches. The idea of standardizing and replicating paragraphs in all resolutions of the Council regarding peacekeeping operations is ill conceived. One size does not fit all. Our countries are very proud of the work done by MINUSTAH, including its military component, which has had exemplary behaviour and operational performance, contributing to its success and ultimately to the work of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7925

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7925th meeting
Thursday, 13 April 2017, 10.55 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Sison	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Fernández Revollo
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-10049 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Kairat Umarov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Kairat Umarov.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): As mandated by paragraph 11 (g) of resolution 1844 (2008), I have the honour to brief the Security Council in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, covering the period from November 2016 to February 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to most sincerely thank my predecessor Ambassador Ramírez Carreño of Venezuela for his able leadership and hard work during the past two years. Today, my briefing will focus on the activities of the Committee and on the assessment of recent developments, based on the most recent reports of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea.

During the reporting period, with regard to the arms embargo on Somalia, the Committee received two notifications pursuant to paragraph 11 (a) of resolution 2111 (2013) and two notifications pursuant to paragraph 10 (g) of resolution 2111 (2013). The Committee also held three informal consultations. On 16 December 2016, the Committee was briefed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on transnational terrorist threats in the IGAD region. On 20 January, the Chair introduced the seven newly appointed members of the Monitoring Group to the Committee. The members presented their plan of activities for the new mandate. In particular, the Group intends to focus its efforts on investigating violations of the arms embargoes and to expand its reporting on the strength, structure and financing of armed groups in the region. The coordinator of the Monitoring Group indicated the Group's intention to maintain its close working relationship with the newly elected federal Government of Somalia.

According to the latest update of the Monitoring Group to the Committee, Al-Shabaab remains the most significant threat to peace and security in Somalia. Despite the successful eviction of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh faction from the port town of Qandala by the Puntland security forces in December 2016, the Group reported that this terrorist organization continues to maintain its presence in the surrounding mountainside.

The assessment of the Monitoring Group that Al-Shabaab is a very critical threat to the stability of the region was also confirmed by representatives of IGAD during the briefing on 16 December 2016. They also stated that no ideological rapprochement between ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Shabaab has been observed.

With regard to the arms embargo, the Monitoring Group reported that the interim Juba administration and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) contingents discovered approximately 25,000 blank-firing pistols on board the SJ African vessel, docked in the port of Kismayo. With full coordination between the interim Juba administration, AMISOM and Monitoring Group arms experts, the Group is continuing its investigation in order to establish the origin of the cargo and its intended destination.

In the light of the ongoing drought, the Monitoring Group reported that the hindering of humanitarian assistance can result in additional threats to the peace, security and stability of Somalia. The Federal Government of Somalia pledged to ensure the removal of all impediments to the delivery of assistance. The willingness of federal and regional leaders to uphold their commitments as well as the international community's determination to implement the operational plan for a pre-famine scale-up of humanitarian assistance in January-June 2017 will be vital for saving lives and preserving stability and security in Somalia.

The Group also remains concerned about the threat to peace and security posed by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in Somalia. With respect to the charcoal ban, it remained unclear to what extent Al-Shabaab was involved in the illicit export of charcoal from Somalia. However, the Monitoring group noted a possible tactical shift away from Al-Shabaab's self-declared ban on trading in charcoal while taking note of significant activity at the charcoal stockpiles in Kismayo and Bur Gabo.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the timely receipt of the letter dated 30 March 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Somalia transmitting the report of the Federal Government of Somalia pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2317 (2016), on the structure, composition, strength and disposition of its security forces, including the status of regional and militia forces.

Turning to Eritrea, pursuant to the Monitoring Group's final report of October 2016 that it had found no conclusive evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab, the Group reported on ongoing investigations into support for armed groups as well as into potential breaches of the arms embargo. Additionally, the Group continues to seek clarification on combatants missing in action since the Djibouti-Eritrean border clashes.

With regard to the upcoming review of sanctions on Eritrea, the Monitoring Group intends to prioritize investigations on Eritrea in its midterm update in order to provide the Committee and the Council with a comprehensive account of Eritrea's compliance with the Council's measures, which would then feed into the review. The Coordinator will present the Group's midterm update to the Committee on 21 April.

Achieving sustainable global peace is impossible without achieving full peace and security in Africa and the Horn of Africa in particular. Severely affected by conflict, the region demands a high proportion of United Nations peacekeeping resources. In this vein, during the reporting period, the Chair has been engaged with members of the Committee as well as concerned Member States on a possible visit of the Chair to the Horn of Africa.

Finally, as the new Chair of the Somalia and Eritrea sanctions Committee, I am committed to working on an open, transparent and objective basis with all the members of the Committee and beyond towards national reconciliation and the restoration of peace in the Horn of Africa.

The President: I thank Ambassador Umarov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for having convened this meeting and for maintaining the Security Council's focus on preventing conflict in Africa. I also thank Kairat for his comprehensive briefing as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, and for his tireless efforts to advance the work of the Committee since he took on the role.

As he has reminded us, Al-Shabaab remains a vicious threat to security in Somalia and indeed to the region. The sanctions regime remains in place to reduce that threat from Al-Shabaab and to tackle threats to peace and security. It does so first through the arms embargo. The regime makes it harder for illicit weapons to flow into Somalia, and it supports the Federal Government of Somalia to establish robust arms and ammunition management, accountability and transparency.

These are key elements in wider security-sector reform, which is both essential and urgent to help make progress on this vital issue. In May, the United Kingdom will host the London Somalia conference, co-chaired by the Secretary-General and the Federal Government of Somalia. We will accelerate progress of security and agree the new international partnership needed to keep Somalia on track towards increased peace and prosperity by 2020. Central to this is continuing the battle against Al-Shabaab.

But as several Security Council members said during the peacekeeping debate convened by the United States presidency last week (see S/PV.7918), we cannot defeat armed groups through military means alone. The political progress made by Somalia in 2017 has laid the essential foundations for peace, stability and growth, which will be so vital to ensuring that Al-Shabaab's support is choked off at the political and economic levels, as well as through the restrictions of the sanctions regime, which denies Al-Shabaab its revenue streams.

The sanctions regime cuts off Al-Shabaab's funding. It preserves Somalia's natural resources for the benefit of its people and Somalia's economic empowerment, it tackles spoilers to Somalia's political progress, and it helps to support the development of Somalia's security forces. In this way, this regime supports the Federal Government of Somalia's fight against Al-Shabaab alongside the bravery and sacrifice of the troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Now more than ever, Somalia needs our continued support. The consequences of the drought in Somalia are far-reaching, and we must all take action now to address the humanitarian crisis and preserve the political and security gains that have been made since 2012.

Turning to Eritrea, I would like to commend the Chair for his great efforts and those of his team for their work to engage with the Government of Eritrea since assuming the role. The United Kingdom continues to urge the Government of Eritrea to comply with its international obligations, including compliance with the Chapter VII resolutions of the Council. We welcome the increased engagement by Eritrea with United Nations human rights mechanisms, and we continue to urge Eritrea to engage with the Committee, its Monitoring Group and the Council.

We should also recall that some serious outstanding issues remain. First, the ongoing mediation by Qatar is vital to ensuring that all Djiboutian combatants missing as a result of the 2008 conflict, including the bodies of any who have died, are accounted for and their families given all the information available.

Secondly, the ongoing refusal by the Government of Eritrea to cooperate with the Monitoring Group, including by allowing them to visit Eritrea, means that we have no way of verifying the Group's lack of evidence for Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab or of understanding the concerns about support for other regional armed groups. We hope that, by the time of the review of the sanctions on Eritrea, due following the midterm report of the Monitoring Group, the Council will have some positive momentum to reflect on. To that end, we encourage Eritrea to take the opportunity for engagement, which the Council is once again offering.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking, Ambassador Umarov, Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, for his statement and, through him, the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group for its latest report and investigative work. In all their aspects, sanctions help support our political goals, and it is therefore our view that they are an important and necessary tool for the Security Council.

With regard to Somalia, I will address three points.

First, I would like to underscore that the fight against the terrorist groups in Somalia, Al-Shabaab and Da'esh, remains a priority and must involve more Somali and local forces. We welcome the work, achievements and territory won by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) since 2007, and take note of the Mission's desire for a planned and coordinated withdrawal. It is now important that the Somali authorities quickly adopt a national security architecture that reflects the Federal structure in Somalia.

The development of a Somali security solution is our priority. The goal is to establish Somali armed forces and police capable of progressively taking charge of the struggle against Al-Shabaab and stabilizing the territories that have been retaken, thereby taking over from the AMISOM. That is the rational of the ongoing reviews, which we support. In that effort, the involvement of regional forces is crucial. We are encouraged by the success of the Puntland forces against Da'esh. The misappropriation of funds and corruption within the Somali army and the non-payment of troops highlighted by the report of the Monitoring Group must spur us to remain demanding with regard to such issues and strengthen the training and professionalization of the Somali security forces.

Secondly, in Somalia as elsewhere the numerous violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law are unacceptable. All those violations are equally reprehensible, particularly so in the case of human rights violations committed by the Somali security forces and the international forces that enjoy international support. If combating terrorism is our priority, it must be done while respecting human rights. It is a matter of principle, but it is also a question of effectiveness, because a military response by the authorities, with AMISOM's support, will succeed only if it enjoys the support of the Somali population. That is why we support the recommendations of the Monitoring Group aimed at promoting better respect for human rights and international humanitarian law by all stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to underline that the ongoing drought in the region, which is threatening millions of lives, calls for an urgent and determined humanitarian response. France has voluntarily contributed an additional €1.6 million to support the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the benefit of people in situations of forced displacement, of which €1 million is earmarked for food aid. Obstacles to the distribution of humanitarian aid, some of which are the responsibility of United Nations partners, especially at the local level, must cease immediately, as the Chair of the Committee said earlier.

Turning to Eritrea, we welcome the apparent lack of support for Al-Shabaab, but it is now incumbent on Eritrea to increase cooperation with the Security Council in line with the principle of cooperation with all United Nations mechanisms, including in particular by inviting the United Nations Monitoring Group to visit and confirm the lack of support for Al-Shabaab starting from Asmara. Such a step would be a sign of a clear desire on the part of Eritrea to move forward and be released from the embargo regime that it has known for eight years.

We must not forget that the embargo regime is also a response to the unresolved issue of Djiboutian prisoners. France welcomes the release of four military Djiboutian prisoners who had been detained in Eritrea since 2008. It is now time to clarify the fate of the other Djiboutian soldiers who remain missing, according to authorities in Djibouti, and address the border issue. With regard to those issues, the Eritrean authorities have everything to gain in providing comprehensive clarifications so as to normalize relations with Djibouti.

Today, 13 April, also marks the fifteenth anniversary of the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission regarding the delimitation of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Like the European Union, France is committed to that decision and encourages all measures that will make it possible to move forward on demarcating the border in compliance with the 2002 decision. France, along with the European Union, is ready to support such a process so as to establish conditions for peaceful relations between neighbouring countries.

In conclusion, the Chair of the Committee can count on France's continued support. I would like once again to commend his work and the Monitoring Group for its periodic and quality reports, and to reiterate France's confidence in the usefulness of his mandate.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, the Senegalese delegation would like to thank Ambassador Kairat Umarov, Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, for his briefing and congratulate him on the outstanding manner in which he is coordinating the work of the Committee.

My delegation would also like to congratulate the new members of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, whose high-quality monthly updates enable us to better understand the situation in Somalia and Eritrea.

With regard to Somalia, the persistent concerns raised in the successive reports of the Monitoring Group illustrate the considerable challenges that the security situation in Somalia continues to pose. Through its presence and harmful actions, Al-Shabaab continues to pose a threat in its continued occupation of large parts of the territory and in carrying out attacks, thereby rendering the country's security situation even more complex — following the satisfactory conclusion of an electoral process last February with the election of His Excellency Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo as the new President of the Federal Government.

The attacks carried out on 9 and 10 April in Mogadishu attest to the difficult security situation. One of those attacks targeted the head of the Somali National Army and resulted in several deaths and injuries. Through me, Senegal once again condemns those acts, offers its condolences to the Somali people and the bereaved families, and wishes a speedy recovery to the wounded. My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate once again the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose tireless vigilance enabled the Chief of the Army to escape the attack.

Senegal is also concerned about the threat posed by the growing presence of the Islamic State in the region as illustrated by the 8 February operation carried out against a hotel by the small faction led by Sheikh Abdulqadir Mumin, which has claimed allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It is worth noting that despite the successful ouster by the Puntland forces of the ISIL faction in Qandala in December 2016, the group continues to maintain a strong presence in the surrounding mountains. Accordingly, the Senegalese delegation would like to reiterate its conviction that

only the full cooperation of the States of the region, through the regional frameworks and mechanisms established for this purpose, can enable a coordinated, and therefore lasting, response to the problem of Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups that undermine the region.

With regard to the arms embargo, the Monitoring Group reported on the discovery on 23 January of approximately 25,000 blank firing pistols by the Interim Jubba Administration and contingents of AMISOM on board the vessel the *SJ African* in Kismayo. We welcome the cooperation of those responsible from the Interim Jubba Administration and AMISOM and the weapons experts of the Monitoring Group who were able to gain access the container and who are working to determine the origin and destination of these weapons. We also note that the Group expressed concern about the threat to peace and security posed by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in Somalia, as reflected in its latest report, the presence of seven trawlers near Bosaso, which provoked demonstrations by local fishermen in February.

With respect to the attacks on humanitarian workers, the hijacking of aid and the obstacles to its delivery, we firmly condemn all of them, whoever the perpetrators might be. My delegation therefore calls for a substantial reform of security in the country and the eradication of corruption that can be found in many sectors of activity.

With regard to the ban on the sale of charcoal, we note with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation by Member States of the measures taken to this end. However, illegal export of charcoal continues, unfortunately, with the use of different methods to facilitate evasion, in particular, the counterfeiting of customs documentation. It should also be noted that although Al-Shabaab is no longer involved in the charcoal trade, it nevertheless continues to levy taxes on its production and transport. It is therefore appropriate to ask AMISOM to redouble its efforts to help the Somali Federal Government to prevent the export of charcoal and facilitate the Monitoring Group's access to the coal-export ports, including, if necessary, the provision of means of transport and any other appropriate security measures.

Regarding Eritrea, the delegation of Senegal would like to once again invite the country to work more closely with the Monitoring Group to create the conditions that could lead to the lifting of sanctions.

In conclusion, we reiterate our encouragement to the State of Qatar, which, in its capacity as mediator, spares no effort to resolve the differences between Djibouti and Eritrea, particularly with regard to the latent question of the remaining missing persons.

Mr. Illichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We listened very carefully to the briefing by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, Mr. Kairat Umarov, on the activities carried out by the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. We thank him for his very skilful leadership of this subsidiary body of the Security Council.

We share the view that the situation in the area of security on Somalia remains difficult. In this regard, we note the decision made by the President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, to call, on 6 April, a state of emergency and a 60-day amnesty for the Al-Shabaab fighters who agree to lay down their weapons. The reason for taking these initiatives was a number of terrorist acts in the capital and in the region, as well as the renewal of pirate attacks on foreign merchant ships off the shores of the country. We are also concerned by the fact that peaceful civilians are increasingly becoming the victims of terrorist attacks. In this regard, we note with satisfaction that, in the context of the yearly rotation of military personnel in Somalia, on 8 April, a new contingent, consisting of 5,700 troops, arrived from Uganda to ensure security in the country.

We are in favour of ensuring that the international community continues to take measures to increase the fighting capacity of the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), because they bear the main burden of fighting Al-Shabaab. We need to react to and follow very closely the humanitarian situation in Somalia, which has become very difficult. We know that a few regions are now facing the threat of famine. At the same time, we must also note that the successful election in Somalia is a very important milestone on the path towards national reconciliation, rebuilding Government institutions and creating democratic institutions. We expect that the Federal Government will work actively to settle the domestic political situation and develop the country socially and economically.

We are in favour of strengthening the sanctions regime in Somalia, strictly adhering in particular to the arms and charcoal embargoes, including the monitoring of areas off the shores of Somalia and extending assistance to the authorities by AMISOM in this sphere, as provided for in resolution 2317 (2016). We believe that such an embargo is a key instrument for ensuring that the extremist forces in the country do not receive additional assistance. We have had good experience with the practice of partially lifting the embargo on providing weapons to the Somali armed forces at the request of the Federal Government.

With regard to the international restrictions on Eritrea, we think that what we should be discussing is not lifting but rather optimizing the sanctions that would be helped bythe development of a relevant road map, especially since the criteria for introducing sanctions cannot be confirmed by the Monitoring Group. We note that the Group is discussing Asmara's alleged interference in the internal affairs of Djibouti and Ethiopia. This information needs to be carefully checked.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that any sanctions regime is not a dogma but something that needs to be adapted to changing realities and periodically reconsidered to see whether it is still in line with the reasons that created it initially.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my sincere thanks to the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan for his comprehensive briefing on the activities of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. I would also like to express our appreciation to him for his objective and professional leadership of the Committee. He has sought to be effective in promoting stability and security in the Horn of Africa. Egypt expresses its full support for such efforts, as well as for the Monitoring Group. It is important to expand international and regional efforts to confront the threats the countries of the region are currently facing.

As for the situation in Somalia, despite the positive developments in the recent period, including successful parliamentary and presidential elections and the peaceful transfer of power to the new President, the activities of Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups continue to be a major obstacle on the road to building peace and completing the rebuilding of State institutions. Efforts must be at made to confront these groups in order to reveal the sources of their arms financing. These groups must also be challenged through a strict implementation of the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council. The Monitoring Group must inquire into any breaches of the embargo. At the same time, the reform of the Somali national security forces must continue apace and not be impeded.

As for the sanctions on Eritrea, I should like to pay tribute to the successive reports of the Monitoring Group to the effect that there is no evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab. Egypt has a principled position on sanctions. Sanctions are not an end in themselves but a measure to be resorted to in exceptional circumstances for a specific period of time in order to achieve particular political objectives. It is therefore important to periodically review such sanctions so as to ensure that they are commensurate with the situation on the ground. Sanctions may be lifted as long as the conditions imposed by the Security Council are met.

Egypt looks forward to the midterm report of the Monitoring Group, in accordance with resolution 2317 (2016) concerning sanctions against Eritrea. There must be better cooperation between Eritrea and the Monitoring Group. Constructive dialogue among all regional parties is important in order to reach solutions to the region's conflicts. Let me also stress the importance of a speedy and final settlement of the issue of Djibouti's missing personnel, which has humanitarian dimensions that cannot be ignored. Egypt therefore stresses the need for the parties to step up their efforts to that end.

We express our support for the Monitoring Group, whose members must be objective and professional in seeking the truth regarding the implementation of the sanctions regime. Furthermore, the principle of equitable regional representation must be respected in the establishment of such groups. There must be an appropriate African presence in the Group of highly qualified experts with skills and an understanding of the situation in the region.

Finally, we support Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Committee and thank it for its efforts to attain peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the United States for convening this meeting. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Umarov on assuming the chairmanship of

the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. China will actively support his work.

At present, the situation in Somalia is seeing positive developments. The Federal Government of Somalia is committed to advancing the political process and national reconstruction, and has achieved positive results. China commends the African Union and countries of the region for their contributions to combatting Al-Shabaab. We call on the international community to help Somalia's statebuilding and support the efforts of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army to counter terrorism in order to achieve peace and stability in the Horn of Africa as soon as possible.

The Horn of Africa has great geopolitical significance. The countries of the region have interconnected interests and are all tasked with attaining economic development and achieving better livelihoods for their people. Those goals require a peaceful and stable regional environment. China hopes that the countries of the region will promote the overall peace and stability of the Horn of Africa, as well as the fundamental interests of its peoples. They should strengthen good-neighbourly and friendly relations, conduct pragmatic cooperation, resolve disputes through dialogue and consultations and jointly address the threat of terrorism, in line with their common interests.

It has always been China's position that sanctions are not an end in themselves but contribute to the process of achieving a political solution. Sanctions should be adjusted based on developments on the ground. China hopes that the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group will strictly adhere to its mandate bestowed to it by the Council. We hope that it conducts its work in an objective and impartial manner. The Group should strengthen its communication with all parties and issue a report based on solid, credible information in order to play a constructive role in achieving peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

China firmly supports Somalia's peace process and has provided the best possible assistance to AMISOM and the countries of the Horn of Africa in their peace processes. We are ready to work with the international community in order to continue making our due contributions to peace, stability and development in the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): Let me begin by thanking the Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Mr. Umarov, for his briefing and the excellent work he is doing in his capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. We highly value the work done by the Chair, the Committee and the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group. This is part of our wider effort to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the Horn of Africa.

As the Chair has pointed out, global peace and security cannot be achieved without resolving the disputes and conflicts in the Horn of Africa. In this regard, we would like to draw attention to the statement issued today by the European Union on the 15-year anniversary of the decision by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission on the delineation of the border between the two countries.

We had the opportunity last month to welcome the successful conclusion of the electoral process in Somalia and to hear directly from President Farmajo (see S/PV.7905). We acknowledged then that strengthening the national security sector must now be a top priority for the new President and Government. Sweden shares the assessment of the Monitoring Group that Al-Shabaab remains the most significant threat to security in Somalia. If we are to build on recent progress, sustained engagement by the Council will be vital. As the Government of Somalia turns its attention to building a credible and effective national security sector, the Monitoring Group will be an essential tool for our support to these efforts, and to the Government, in particular with regard to the partial lifting of the arms embargo.

We remain deeply concerned about the severe humanitarian situation caused by the drought in Somalia and the region. In addition to the direct human impact, the effects of the drought have potential negative implications for peace and security. In order to respond to the needs of the five million people already suffering from acute food shortages, immediate safe and unhindered humanitarian access to effectively support the relief effort is essential. The reports of the Monitoring Group on humanitarian access contribute to keeping the Council informed of the situation on the ground, as does its accounts of violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights law. We particularly welcome the Monitoring Group's reporting on sexual and gender-based violence, including on steps taken to end impunity.

We note the report of a possible breach of the arms embargo. It is important that this incident be thoroughly investigated. We would also note the need for continued vigilance regarding any possible exploitation of natural resources by Al-Shabaab.

Turning to Eritrea, we are encouraged by the fact that the Monitoring Group, in consecutive reports, has found no evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab. It is essential that Eritrea cooperate in a constructive manner with the Monitoring Group in order to allow them to verify this finding conclusively. Sweden supports the efforts of the Chair to facilitate a way forward regarding access for the members of the Monitoring Group to Asmara, and believe a visit by the Chair could be a helpful step. We hope that 2017 can be a positive year for engagement between the Monitoring Group and Eritrea. Constructive engagement with the Monitoring Group is in everyone's interest. We encourage the Somali and Eritrean authorities to strengthen relations with the Group, which can help reinforce a positive trajectory for the Horn of Africa. Sweden will continue to give its full support to the group's work in the year ahead.

Mr. Fesko (Ukraine): Let me begin by expressing Ukraine's deep and sincere condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Federal Government of Somalia, regarding recent terrorist attacks carried out by Al-Shabaab that resulted in numerous casualties among the civilian population, including women and children. This is just another confirmation that Al-Shabaab remains the most significant threat to peace and security in Somalia, as was characterized in Ambassador's Umarov's briefing, for which we are thankful.

In the context of an ongoing drought, Al-Shabaab activities hamper joint efforts to provide the much-needed humanitarian response. In that regard we welcome the plan of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Federal Government of Somalia to secure main supply roads and to help facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to drought-stricken communities in the country. We also support cooperation between the Somali National Army and AMISOM troop-contributing countries in the fight against terrorism. In that respect we would like to commend the Kenya Defence Forces for their successful operations on 2 and 26 March, in which a total of 84 Al-Shabaab militants were eliminated.

We note that some progress has been made by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, as well as by the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, to ensure the goals set out in their respective mandates led to a significant improvement in arms and ammunition management in the country and a decrease in illicit exports of charcoal from Somalia. Better-coordinated cooperation in that regard by the Federal Government of Somalia, including through its timely and comprehensive notifications to the Committee, has been an important factor, contributing to the effective implementation of the sanctions regime in Somalia.

We believe that additional joint efforts to ensure the full and effective implementation and enforcement of the arms embargo and charcoal ban will substantially limit illegal arms trafficking within and outside of the country, and will curb the illicit charcoal trade, thus depriving terrorist groups of potential revenues and weapons. We welcome the active involvement of all international partners, Member States and international and regional organizations in providing relevant support to that end. African Union cooperation has been remarkable in that regard, particularly through AMISOM's documentation and registry of all military equipment discovered and captured, as well as through its assistance to the Somali federal authorities in implementing the charcoal ban.

Another issue of concern for us is the spate of attacks on commercial vessels off the coast of Somalia, which highlights an increase in pirate activity in the Gulf of Aden. There are signs that the emergence of piracy could be the result of the financing of pirates by entities from countries in the region. In that regard, we would like to ask the Monitoring Group to follow up on that information and to provide the findings in the midterm update to the Committee. We consider that information crucial to the prevention and countering of piracy and armed robbery at sea. Furthermore, detailed information on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing should be included in the next report of the Monitoring Group.

We cannot fail to mention the recent positive changes in the Somali State- and peacebuilding processes. The peaceful elections of the President and of the speakers of both Houses of the Somali Parliament, followed by the unanimous endorsement of the country's new Prime Minister, all resulting in an unprecedented cross-clan support and community reconciliation, were important

steps towards Somalia's recovery and stabilization. We hope that the newly appointed Council of Ministers of Somalia will succeed in fulfilling its pledges to rebuild the security forces and State institutions, tackle corruption and unify the country.

With regard to Eritrea, we take note that no evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab was reported. At the same time, we are perplexed that in some reports of the Monitoring Group, information about Eritrea's implementation of Council measures is limited to only sentence. In that regard, we look forward to seeing a comprehensive overview of this matter in the midterm update. We proceed from the understanding that constructive cooperation of the Eritrean Government would contribute to effective implementation of the Group's mandate, which is a precondition for any changes to the sanctions regime. In that regard we support the work of the Chair of the Committee to prepare a possible visit to the Horn of Africa and underline the importance of including the Coordinator of the Monitoring Group in such a delegation, with a view to strengthening the result-oriented nature of the visit.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): Japan deeply appreciates Kazakhstan's active leadership as the Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. Japan also commends the work of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea.

Japan extends its full support to President Farmajo as Somalia charts a new course towards peace and prosperity. Many challenges lie ahead, including the need for a national security framework and a representative Somali National Army. There is also the importance of combating Al-Shabaab, building a solid budgetary base through federal State mechanisms and facilitating universal suffrage in 2020. Al-Shabaab, in particular, continues to pose a grave threat to the peace and security of Somalia. The sanctions regime, which includes an exception for the Government of Somalia, remains an effective measure. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has also been key in combating extremist groups, including Al-Shabaab. Japan looks forward to the Somali National Army taking responsibility for the security of the country, including through agreement on the security framework among regional leaders. The London Somalia conference in May would be a perfect opportunity to build political will among Somali leaders, as well as among the international community.

The ongoing famine poses an imminent threat to progress in State-building since the establishment of the Government in 2012. Since January, Japan has provided more than $30 million in humanitarian and security assistance. Japan welcomes the willingness of the Federal and regional Governments to remove all impediments to humanitarian access and hopes that such commitments are implemented fully.

In addition, recent reports of the hijacking of commercial vessels off the coast of Somalia highlight the need for continued international counterpiracy efforts in the region. Japan will continue its warning and surveillance activities and escort operations, while also supporting social services and economic development in the coastal regions. The international community should also bolster its support to the Government of Somalia to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Concerning Eritrea, we hope to see progress in locating combatants missing in action since the Djibouti-Eritrean border clashes.

Also, Japan attaches importance to the visits by the Chair of the Sanctions Committee and the coordinator of the Monitoring Group to Eritrea. We strongly hope that the Eritrean Government will accept such a visit in the near future. Japan looks forward to the midterm update by the Monitoring Group to review measures on Eritrea.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay thanks Ambassador Kairat Umarov, Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, for his briefing. My Government appreciates the work carried out by the Committee, as well as its assessment of recent developments, based on the reports of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. Somalia is at a decisive and historic moment on the path towards the consolidation of a democratic, inclusive, stable State with full powers.

According to the information provided by the Monitoring Group, the terrorist group Al-Shabaab constitutes the main threat to peace and security in Somalia and the region. That is why strengthening the security sector in Somalia is both vital and urgent; it would allow the country to fight effectively against

that threat. The Government of Somalia and the international community should work more closely and in a more coordinated manner, prioritizing capacity-building for Government consolidation and creating the basic conditions of governance, security and services for local populations. In addition, the Government should seek to maintain a closer work relationship with the Monitoring Group. The intention of the Group is to maximize efforts to investigate violations of the arms embargo and to expand its capacity to report on the structure, strength and financing of armed groups in the region.

Another urgent issue is responding to the worsening humanitarian crisis and the famine in Somalia, which could roll back recent political achievements. Uruguay therefore welcomes the Somalia Operational Plan for pre-Famine Scale-up of Humanitarian Assistance, promoted by the Secretary-General, to mitigate the effects of the extreme drought that is ravaging the country.

At the same time, Uruguay urges President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo to fulfil his promise to remove obstacles to the provision of assistance, the import and export of food and vital critical supplies, and the sending of remittances, and to suspend new bureaucratic requirements at the sub-federal level imposed on aid providers. The Federal Government must make this effort in a sustained way in order to preserve stability and security in Somalia.

The plight of women and children is a source of deep concern to us, given their extreme vulnerability to the humanitarian crisis affecting the country. The Government bears the chief responsibility for ending impunity for crimes of sexual and gender-based violence. According to UNICEF and the World Health Organization, 98 per cent of women and girls in Somalia have suffered female genital mutilation, which is the highest rate in the world, despite the fact that the practice is prohibited by the Constitution of Somalia and is defined as torture. We also draw the attention to the issue of child marriage, which is still a common practice in Somalia. The Government should promote the investigation of complaints and the reintegration of victims into their communities.

With regard to Eritrea, Uruguay notes that the complete report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea will be submitted in the next few days, with a focus on investigations in Eritrea. We hope that the report will enlighten the Council members and provide key elements for assessing the relevance of the sanctions imposed on that country.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank Ambassador Kairat Umarov for his briefing on the activities of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, which we found extremely useful and very well balanced. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee and assure him of our full support in the effective discharge of his responsibilities. He has, in fact, already made a difference in bringing seriousness to the work and in being non-ideological. We highly appreciate his commitment to working in an open, transparent and objective manner with all the members of the Committee.

The 751 and 1907 sanctions regime has great significance for regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa, and we attach importance to its full and effective implementation. In that regard, we appreciate the fact that the Committee held a briefing session with representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development on transnational terrorist threats in the region. We believe that such briefings have a lot of relevance to the work of the Committee, and we encourage the Chair to continue this good practice, in line with the mandate of the Committee, in order to create a better understanding of the challenges and threats facing the region.

No doubt, Al-Shabaab remains a potent force capable of launching asymmetrical attacks, although its conventional capabilities have been significantly weakened. Its possible links with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) will have enormous implications for peace and stability in the region. Therefore, this is certainly something that needs to be followed up very closely and very seriously.

We welcome the appointment of the new members of the Monitoring Group, whose work is critical to ensuring the implementation of the sanctions regime. We have been cooperating with the Group outside the Council, and we are now ready to do so in our capacity as a member of the Council and with a great sense of responsibility. We understand that the work of the Group is dependent on the relevance and quality of information gathered, and the cooperation of countries in the region and others remains very important in that

regard. We hope and expect that in the three months since they started their work, members of the Group have undertaken the necessary examination of existing and new information gathered in the course of their new mandate. In the light of reports of possible violations of the arms embargo in particular, we will wait for the Monitoring Group to inform us of the outcome of its investigation in its midterm report. Of course, forging the necessary horizontal cooperation with other panels of experts is important during the process of investigating those reports, and we trust that this has already been done in the course of the investigation.

The cooperation of Somalia, Eritrea and countries of the region is absolutely necessary to facilitating the work of the Monitoring Group and the Sanctions Committee. In that regard, we appreciate the willingness of the Federal and regional Governments in Somalia to cooperate with the Monitoring Group. We also note the submission by the Federal Government of Somalia of its report, in line with paragraph 7 of resolution 2317 (2016), on the structure, composition, strength and disposition of its security forces, including the status of regional and militia forces.

In the same vein, it is incumbent on the Ethiopian Government to render the necessary cooperation to the Monitoring Group and the Sanctions Committee based on its obligations, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions. As the Monitoring Group has stated, for instance, it is important that Eritrea clarify the situation of the remaining soldiers identified by Djibouti as still missing in action as a result of the conflict of June 2008, in line with its treaty obligations and as directed by the Council.

We note the intention of the Chair to undertake a visit to the region, which is long overdue. It will certainly help in developing a better appreciation of regional dynamics. We hope that the visit will take place in accordance with existing practice. We want to make it clear that putting preconditions on the visit to enlist concessions from the Council should by no means be entertained, as it would set a dangerous precedent. We are confident that the Chair will handle this matter very carefully.

But the visit is important because, among other things, it would allow the Chair to appreciate the existing hubris and arrogance that have been such a problem in our region, masked behind a veneer of victimhood that may deceive many. That is the context within which the issue of the boundary demarcation should be looked at since, seen alongside other matters, it pales enormously by comparison. Delimitation having been completed, what remains is demarcation, regarding which Ethiopia cannot be expected to applaud with one hand.

Given the geopolitical situation in our region, this matter and the issue of sanctions can easily be politicized. That is why the Chair must be wise and perceptive, which we have no doubt he is. That is why we trust that he cannot determine that the link between Eritrea and Al-Shabaab has conclusively proven to be non-existent. The Monitoring Group has never made such a claim. Given the mortal danger that Al-Shabaab represents, this is not a joke. It is a serious matter.

Lastly, Ethiopia unquestionably considers this issue extremely important, and we are committed to engaging actively and constructively to support the Committee's work.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): Like my colleagues before me, I would like to thank Ambassador Kairat Umarov warmly for his thorough briefing today and congratulate him on his assumption of the chairship of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. I do not need to elaborate here on why that Committee has so much importance for my country.

Today's briefing is taking place at a critical time for the stability of the whole of North Africa. The regional scenario is making progress, while Somalia and Eritrea remain key actors in its balance. The Security Council is called on to help realize its potential by promoting the factors that can lead to peace and stability in the region. On the fifteenth anniversary of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission's decision on the border delimitation between the two countries, we would like to note today's declaration by the European Union on the subject.

Starting with their very first statements, President Farmajo and Prime Minister Khaire have established Somalia's political priorities, all of which are relevant to the sanctions regime: national reconciliation; fighting Al-Shabaab; strengthening the capacity of the country's security forces, including the police; implementing a national plan for security strategies for preventing violent extremism; improving the management of arms and ammunition; and combating corruption.

Somalia is at a decisive crossroads on its path to reconstruction. Italy supports its legitimate aspiration to guide that reconstruction and shore up its ownership of the process, which is the cornerstone of the principle of sustaining peace endorsed by the Council last year. The Secretary-General's review of the future presence of the United Nations in the country, the joint United Nations and African Union review of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia represent an important opportunity for the Council to consolidate its path in the region.

When we look at the chief concerns of the Federal Government of Somalia about the current sanctions regime, we realize that they are largely triggered by external factors — the threat of Al-Shabaab and the related obstacles to humanitarian access in order to fight drought and famine; the presence of Da'esh; the alleged violations of the arms embargo by third States; and the alleged illegal exploitation of Somalia's fisheries and charcoal resources. On the other hand, the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group has recognized that the Federal Government of Somalia has cooperated fully in the implementation of the sanctions regime and that the Somali regional authorities are improving their cooperation with the Monitoring Group and AMISOM, as was apparent in the case of the interim Juba administration in January. The Security Council can now combine Mogadishu's effort to beef up reliable security forces with benchmarks as the sanctions burden is gradually lifted. Any further progress by the Somali leadership in controlling and managing arms and ammunition should be taken into account in relation to any possible reconfiguration of the sanctions regime.

Turning to Eritrea, our position is equally clear. The Security Council will be making a holistic assessment based on the Monitoring Group's recent reports and progress updates, as required by the relevant Council resolutions. Over the past three years, the Monitoring Group has said that it has not found any evidence of Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab. At the same time, however, the information alleging that Eritrea has supported other armed groups in the region is cause for concern. In the dispute about prisoners of war between Eritrea and Djibouti, mediated by Qatar, we saw conflicting claims about the fate of missing combatants. It is our hope that the Monitoring Group will be able to help to clarify their effective status so that the Council can reach well-grounded conclusions.

Lastly, pending the report on recommendations for a possible review of the sanctions regime on Eritrea, we expect the Monitoring Group's observations to be fair, impartial and evidence-based. To that end, we encourage Eritrea to cooperate with the Monitoring Group in order to help the Security Council make an unbiased decision on a basis of established facts.

Mr. Fernández Revollo (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Ambassador Umarov, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, and Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, for his briefing and for his work on the Committee. We greatly value the efforts of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, which was established to support the Committee's work. It is an essential tool for keeping the Security Council informed about the situation on the ground. It should operate with complete impartiality and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries.

The sanctions regime on Somalia and Eritrea is one of the Council's longest-running such regimes. The modifications that have been made to it have not necessarily resulted in any marked progress. In our view, the time has come to consider the effectiveness of the sanctions and whether they are worth continuing. We would like to emphasize the political advances in Somalia, of which this year's elections are proof positive of the progress that it has made in the past four years. It is vital that efforts continue to ensure that elections will also be conducted beyond the capital and that by 2020 the country will be able to count on having a one-person, one-vote system.

We continue to be very concerned about the presence of Al-Shabaab, which is still a threat to peace and security in Somalia. According to the Monitoring Group's report, that terrorist organization continues to maintain a presence in some of the most remote areas of Puntland. It is a threat not only to Somalia but to the stability of the entire region. Its presence has also been confirmed by representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We would like to emphasize that Al-Shabaab's presence is also a threat to all the organizations that are providing humanitarian assistance in the area, thanks to the obstacles it presents to their efforts. We urge the Government of Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia and all international stakeholders to provide the protection that those humanitarian efforts need and

ensure that the international embargo on the export of charcoal is respected.

With regard to Eritrea, we are pleased that once again there has been no proof that its Government has given support to the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. The Security Council should take note of that and respond accordingly. As for the regional and border issues, the countries concerned should end all support to any armed or rebel groups that undermine their internal stability. We welcome Eritrea's release of four prisoners of war to Djibouti and urge both parties to continue to work through Qatar's mediation efforts to resolve their existing problems.

Bolivia hopes sincerely that the countries of the region can continue to keep in mind the overarching goal of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and their peoples' fundamental interests. We hope they can strengthen their good-neighbourly relations, promote unity and cooperation and settle their differences through dialogue and consultation, benefiting the common interests of every country in the region. We hope that the Security Council will take into consideration the changes that have occurred on the ground, continually review the relevant provisions of its resolutions and make appropriate adjustments.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

I would like to thank Ambassador Umarov for his briefing. We warmly welcome him in his new role as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, and have full confidence in his ability to lead the Committee as it oversees the important role these sanctions play in advancing peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

I would also like to thank the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group for its efforts to report on the implementation of the sanctions and to keep the Council and the Sanctions Committee informed on a range of issues affecting the Horn of Africa, including counter-Al-Shabaab efforts, corruption, piracy, international human rights and humanitarian law violations, and violations of the sanctions measures.

Turning first to Somalia, the Chairman's briefing highlighted many of the ongoing reasons why the Council must remain committed to supporting Somali efforts to pave the way towards a stable, prosperous and peaceful future. We share Ambassador Umarov's concern about the ongoing threat Al-Shabaab poses to Somalia and the region. Today, we are witnessing increasing depravity from Al-Shabaab as it intensifies its asymmetric attacks against civilian targets, security services and Government officials. We must maintain robust counter-Al-Shabaab efforts to prevent backsliding on the tentative security gains achieved in recent years.

The cycle of violence in Somalia and the region cannot be broken without good governance. We strongly support President Farmajo's and Prime Minister Khayre's focus on combatting corruption, and welcome the new Federal Government of Somalia's financial disclosure and code of conduct requirements for ministers. We are ready to lend greater support to strengthen the Federal Government's fiscal transparency and oversight efforts. We support the use of sanctions as a tool and as part of a comprehensive United Nations strategy to deter violence and corrupt activities. We welcome President Farmajo's call for security sector reform and encourage improved, transparent and inclusive governance. It is imperative that Somali resources benefit all Somalis, that Somali security services be well trained and adequately compensated, and that security forces respect human rights and be held to high standards of accountability.

On the arms embargo, we urge the Federal Government of Somalia and Member States to increase their efforts to comply with existing measures and to notify the Committee promptly when making use of the relevant exemptions when supporting Somali security sector institutions. We are particularly keen to understand more about the potential plans of a Member State to build a military base in Berbera and the discovery of 25,000 blank-firing pistols in the port of Kismaayo. We urge the Federal Government of Somalia and Member States to redouble their efforts to implement the embargo and share information in order to ensure that weapons do not fall into the hands of Al-Shabaab or others with malicious intent.

We also encourage the Joint Verification Team to continue to make progress on its important goal of improving the Federal Government of Somalia's management of weapons and ammunition. Illegal activities such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and illicit trade in charcoal contribute to corruption and instability in Somalia and the region. As the Chair raised in his briefing, we continue to

express our concern over illicit, unreported and unregulated fishing in Somali waters, which poses a threat to coastal communities' livelihood and food security. We welcome any Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group reporting on the recent uptick in piracy activity, as well as on the nexus between illicit, unreported and unregulated fishing and piracy.

On the illicit charcoal trade, while the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group has reported some indication that Al-Shabaab may be shifting away from this trade, we still believe that the group is attracted to this kind of financing. Member States should remain vigilant and cooperative, and actively share information as it relates to the charcoal ban in order to more robustly enforce it.

Turning to Eritrea, the Council will have a number of serious issues on its agenda to consider as it prepares for the upcoming review of United Nations sanctions on Eritrea. These include the need for a full and transparent accounting of the whereabouts of remaining Djiboutian prisoners of war, assessing the extent of Eritrea's arms embargo violations, Eritrea's support for armed groups that seek to destabilize the region, and the extent to which Eritrea is willing to cooperate with the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group.

Related to cooperation between the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group and the Government of Eritrea, it will be important for the Monitoring Group to travel to Eritrea with the Chair during his proposed visit to the region. Without Eritrea's engagement with the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group, including by allowing the Monitoring Group to visit Asmara, the Council will not be able to make a fully informed decision about the future of these sanctions. We believe that it is only through open dialogue here and in Asmara that we can address remaining peace and security challenges. We sincerely hope that the Government of Eritrea will seize the opportunity to take a first step towards improving engagement with the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group through this proposed visit.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti wishes to express its gratitude to the President of the Security Council for this month, the United States, and the members of the Council for this opportunity to address the Council.

Furthermore, we wish to thank Ambassador Umarov, Chairman of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, for his briefing to the Security Council.

With respect to Somalia, we share the Chair's assessment that Al-Shabaab continues to pose a serious threat to peace and security in Somalia. It has been ramping up attacks after rejecting President Farmajo's amnesty offer. In light of the gravity and viciousness of the threat, we support the request of the Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for a surge in troops to enable AMISOM forces and the Somali National Army to decisively degrade and defeat Al-Shabaab.

Likewise, we echo the call made by Secretary-General António Guterres to provide enhanced logistical support for under-equipped African Union forces in Somalia, in particular force enablers and multipliers, including helicopters. We are indeed confident that with the enhanced, sustained and coordinated support of the international community, the new Somali leadership will be able to deliver significant peace dividends to the population and improve security and access to justice.

Turning to Eritrea, we are deeply troubled and concerned by the fact that the distinct lack of cooperation that characterized previous mandates continues to date. Eritrea has deliberately chosen to obstruct the work of the Monitoring Group. It has consistently and arrogantly refused to allow the Monitoring Group to verify the facts. Instead of openly and transparently cooperating, as directed by the Council, it has slammed the door on the Group and denied it any access to the information it needs to determine whether or not Eritrea was in compliance with the Council's resolutions. In other words, Eritrea cynically seeks to be rewarded for its defiance of Security Council resolutions. It seeks just to stonewall, refuse to cooperate, prevent the missions from finding the facts and hold on until the Council is sufficiently frustrated by the failure of its actions and sufficiently troubled by the impact of its sanctions to throw up its hands in surrender.

In support of that strategy, it has formulated a victimhood narrative that may sound appealing to those who do not know the facts of the situation in the region. The facts have nevertheless come to the surface, as highlighted both in numerous Security Council monitoring reports and the report of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

on transnational threats in the IGAD region. Conversely, Djibouti has twice welcomed experts of the Monitoring Group to Djibouti this year and has been able to share valuable information.

On Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab, Djibouti is of the view that Eritrea continues to provide support to Al-Shabaab. It has shared information that it deems credible and verifiable with the members of the Monitoring Group.

On the prisoners of war, Eritrea should be urged to clarify the situation of 13 remaining Djiboutian prisoners of war still unaccounted for. Not only is that a requirement of the Security Council, but it is also required by the international treaty and customary law by which Eritrea is bound.

On Eritrea's compliance with the 2010 Qatar mediation agreement, the Security Council has determined that the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region. It has urged Eritrea to implement in good faith the dispositions of the accord and enter into talks with Djibouti with the ultimate objective of reaching a final and binding agreement on the border dispute, in accordance with international law. Djibouti promptly submitted to His Royal Highness the Emir of Qatar a comprehensive statement of pertinent facts and legal principles applicable to this matter. To date, seven days later, Eritrea continues to refuse to comply with the provisions of the agreement.

On Eritrea's support to armed groups, Eritrea continues to harbour, train, equip and provide logistical support to armed groups seeking to overthrow and destabilize the Government of Djibouti. It continues to do so, without an ounce of remorse, in violation of its obligations under Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, customary international law and its obligations under Security Council resolutions. Djibouti urges Eritrea to permanently cease and desist from such activities.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our profound gratitude to the members of the Council for their continued vigilance and support. Indeed, no country can continuously defy the Security Council's resolutions and expect not to face the consequences of its actions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam, on the United States assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of April. I would like to thank the Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, His Excellency Ambassador Kairat Umarov, for his briefing and for his efforts to enhance constructive and genuine dialogue. I would like to assure the Chair of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of his responsibilities.

As a matter of coincidence, this open briefing of the Security Council is taking place on the very date the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission gave its final and binding ruling 15 years ago, on 13 April 2002. To the regret of many who worked hard to realize peace, Ethiopia to this date continues to occupy sovereign Eritrean territory, including the town of Badme, in violation of its treaty obligation and international law. The hope of achieving peace and security for the people of the region has been dashed, and the opportunity to build a common front for common challenges has been postponed indefinitely.

It would indeed be remiss of its duty in the maintenance of international peace and security for the Security Council to ignore the failure and refusal by one of the parties to implement a mutual agreement that it had solemnly signed, particularly when we recall that the agreement was guaranteed and witnessed by the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the United States and Algeria.

The Security Council is actively seized at the present time of all regional issues — including the Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and so on — where intra-State or inter-State conflicts have or continue to rage. But it continues to studiously avoid the Eritrea/Ethiopia conflict. The Security Council cannot continue its 15 years of inaction in the face of destabilizing acts of occupation and aggression that threaten regional peace and stability. This is not only morally and legally unacceptable, but it is increasingly evident that the simmering tension is untenable and fraught with perilous escalation.

The sanctions regime that has been imposed on Eritrea has entered its eighth year. Its negative impact on Eritrea and the Horn of Africa region cannot in any way be minimized. Clearly, the time has come — in fact, it is long overdue — to lift the sanctions on Eritrea.

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight few a facts:

First, the sanctions on Eritrea have never been justified or motivated by a genuine desire to promote regional peace and security. While their imposition was unjustified, their continuation can be viewed only as a desire to spread crises in a region that is already suffering from conflicts. We need fewer conflicts, not more.

Secondly, the two justifications for the imposition of sanctions were Eritrea's alleged support to Al-Shabaab in Somalia and its alleged refusal to resolve its dispute with Djibouti. For four years, the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group has found no evidence of any Eritrean wrongdoing in Somalia.

Thirdly, with respect to Djibouti, Eritrea remains committed to the mediation of the State of Qatar, which has resulted in the release of all Djiboutian prisoners of war. The latest monitoring report made it clear that all interlocutors only mention seven prisoners of war in Eritrea. These are all accounted for — two escapees, one who passed away and four who were released through the efforts of Qatar. Eritrea has confirmed that there are no more Djiboutian prisoners in its hands. Moreover, Eritrea cannot be asked to second-guess the whereabouts of persons missing in action, as claimed by Djibouti. The burden of proof lies squarely on the accuser, the Government of Djibouti. On its part, Eritrea is committed to resolving any outstanding issue with Djibouti under the mediation of Qatar.

Fourthly, failing to find substantive evidence to continue the sanctions, some countries have resorted to procedural pretexts by singularly and inordinately focusing on the inability of the Monitoring Group to visit Eritrea. It must be recalled here that the Monitoring Group has actually visited Eritrea twice on previous occasions. The Monitoring Group also maintains, without any hindrance, extensive meetings and contacts with relevant Eritrean officials. As Council members are aware, the Monitoring Group has itself ascertained the absence of any indication of Eritrea's support to Al-Shabaab. In the circumstances, Eritrea does not see any added value in a visit by the Monitoring Group to the country. Eritrea's primary preoccupation is in fact the public stance of certain countries that have openly stated that they would not support the lifting of the sanctions even if the Group were to visit Eritrea.

Eritrea wishes once again to reaffirm its commitment to sustainable peace and cooperation in the region. Eritrea will continue to make its positive contribution to regional peace, stability and security in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea area. In that connection, Eritrea reiterates call on the Security Council to contribute to regional peace, cooperation and amity by lifting the unjustified sanctions and by ensuring Ethiopia's withdrawal from sovereign Eritrean territory.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7926

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7926th meeting
Tuesday, 18 April 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Rakhmetullin
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsya/ Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

genda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Human rights and prevention of armed conflict

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-10329 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Human rights and prevention of armed conflict

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and thank him for taking the time to be here.

The Secretary-General: I thank the United States presidency for convening today's important meeting.

We are all aware that large-scale human rights violations cause terrible suffering and undermine prospects for sustainable peace and reconciliation. Healing these wounds is always a difficult and painful process, yet that responsibility grows with each new instance of mass killings or mass displacement, and sexual violence.

Prevention is an essential means of reducing human suffering, building stable and prosperous societies, and enabling people to reach their full potential — and upholding human rights is a crucial element in prevention. International cooperation for prevention, and particularly for translating early warning into early action, depends on trust between Member States and in their relations with the United Nations.

The Security Council has a major role to play. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations is clear that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the Council "[i]n order to ensure prompt and effective action". I address the Council in that spirit. The issue today is not that human rights violations undermine every aspect of our shared values and common work, but rather how the United Nations responds.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to draw the Council's attention to three points in order to better focus our discussion:

First, the quest for peace is what should guide us along a continuum from prevention and conflict resolution to peacebuilding and sustainable development. Peace is a tireless undertaking, to which all United Nations agencies and bodies must work, in accordance with their mandates and responsibilities.

Secondly, peace, security, human rights and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. The Charter of the United Nations, which we are all dutybound to defend, has played a fundamental role in that regard in that it links these three pillars. When the United Nations tries to deal with them in isolation, it often fails in the mission entrusted to it by Member States and peoples. Several reform processes have shown that the fragmentation of our action is one of our major weaknesses. Together, we must return to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations to prevent armed conflicts and achieve a lasting peace for development. Hence the need to effectively protect all human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Thirdly, the United Nations must consider human rights in a coherent and rational manner. It is the primary responsibility of Member States to integrate the promotion and protection of human rights into their national policies. But close cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council, enhances the general awareness of potential crisis situations and our collective capacity to address them. Member States expect the Secretariat to present appropriate information and options, while respecting the mandates and the principle of independence. I am ready to promote a more confident relationship and improve communication with the Council emphasising coherence, frankness and transparency.

Human rights are intrinsically linked to peace and security, and their inclusion in the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council is of great importance. The unity of the Council is crucial in order to effectively address the most flagrant violations of human rights, and in particular to prevent mass atrocities. I call on the Council to spare no effort to put an end to the intolerable sufferings of the Syrian people. Failure in that task would be a tragedy to shame us all.

(*spoke in English*)

There is growing awareness of the ways in which rights violations signal threats to security and how rights upheld can contribute to peace. Recent experience offers many examples. United Nations peace operations

have been progressively authorized with robust human rights and protection of civilians mandates. Indeed, 15 Security Council-mandated peace operations include a human rights element. Systematic monitoring and reporting of human rights violations has given a voice to victims and advanced the fight against impunity. Moreover, these efforts offer important warning signals to societies that also highlight the Council's determination to prevent further abuses. To advance this work, I encourage close cooperation with my Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

Human rights work contributes to missions' efforts to protect civilians under threat, and the missions' engagement with host States on human rights issues has helped build capacities and even, in some circumstances, preserve democratic space. The Council has also taken decisive action to prosecute alleged perpetrators of the most brutal crimes by establishing the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, and by referring cases to the International Criminal Court. Accountability for such crimes is an important element in achieving reconciliation, and over the longer term building resilient societies and judicial institutions.

Other key initiatives of the Council include advancing the protection of children in armed conflict and action against sexual-based violence in armed conflict. The Council has also put the human rights of women and children high on its agenda as a valuable input to its peace efforts. I remain deeply committed to that agenda and will spare no efforts to step up the work and support of the Secretariat. Protecting young generations from conflict-situations is one of the best investments we can make towards achieving sustainable peace.

Despite all these efforts, millions of people still need to be protected from crises, and far more time and resources continue to be spent responding to crises than to preventing them. If we are to truly address today's challenges, we must make prevention our priority, tackle the root causes of conflict, help build and strengthen institutions, and react earlier and more effectively to address human rights concerns. That is the lesson learned from so many conflicts, and what I remain staunchly committed to that agenda.

Our world is facing unprecedented peace and security challenges that result from a lack of prevention and from insufficient implementation of human rights obligations, including social and economic rights. The consequences for people and States, and indeed for humankind, are being felt by tens of millions and by entire regions. Ensuring improved and less politicized action on human rights is a critical part of meeting this challenge, as is achieving urgent progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Allow me to suggest a theoretical test. If the most acute human rights and development concerns were immediately resolved, how many situations would still be threats to peace and security and remain on the Council's agenda? I have set in motion various reforms of the Secretariat that will enable us to play our role better, in keeping with the mandates and trust the Member States place in us. The resolutions on sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are cause for hope; progress on human rights aspects would further complement these advances.

In the months to come, I hope that Member States will engage through the General Assembly and the Security Council to support my reform proposals and strengthen them with their own.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his time, his leadership and his service on this issue.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

Thirty years ago, my predecessor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, made the case that human rights have a special place in foreign policy. It had been just two years since the General Assembly had adopted its outragous resolution 3379 (XXX), equating Zionism with racism. Moynihan thought that tolerance and compassion could use a win at the United Nations and, as usual, he was right.

The first argument he offered for paying greater attention to this subject was that human rights are inalienable rights. When we embrace human rights, we embrace the values that are held, among others, by all the world's major religions. Indeed, one of the purposes of the United Nations is, according to the Charter, "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or relgion". Ambassador Moynihan did not stop with arguing that protecting human rights is the right thing to do. He also argued that it is the smart thing to do — and it is.

Despite his advice in the 1970s, the Council has never held a meeting focused exclusively on human rights. Today, we will do that. We have held meetings devoted to specific situations in specific countries, but we have never dedicated a meeting to the broader question of how human rights violations and abuses can lead to a breakdown in peace and security. The traditional view has been that the Security Council is for maintaining international peace and security, not for human rights.

I am here today to assert that the protection of human rights is often deeply intertwined with peace and security. The two things often cannot be separated. In case after case, human rights violations and abuses are not merely the incidental by-products of conflict, but the trigger of conflict. When a State begins to systematically violate human rights, it is a sign; it is a red flag; it is a blaring siren — one of the clearest possible indicators that instability and violence may follow and spill across borders. It is no surprise that the world's most brutal regimes are also the most ruthless violators of human rights.

Let us consider North Korea. Systematic human rights violations help underwrite the country's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The Government forces many of its citizens, including political prisoners, to work in life-threatening conditions in coal mines and other dangerous industries to finance the regime's military. Because they do, the Security Council must devote considerable efforts to addressing North Korea's increasing threats to international peace.

Turning to Syria, in 2011, a group of boys between the ages of 12 and 15 years spray-painted the following message on the wall of their school: "The people want the fall of the regime." For that, the Syrian regime arrested them. Those children were brutally beaten, had their fingernails ripped out by grown men in Government prisons and were tortured before being returned to their parents. The outrage spawned more protests and more crackdowns, and the cycle repeated until the situation turned into a full-fledged war. It was not just any war, but one that has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees.

What began with assorted human rights violations and abuses that the Council has been reluctant to address has become a security issue that we are forced to address repeatedly. It is a prime example of why we should take human rights violations and abuses more serious from their beginning.

In other cases, Governments use violence and human rights violations to stifle dissent. We have seen numerous instances in which the Burundian Government services have used torture to crackdown on protesters. That has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighbouring countries and caused massive regional disruption. It is little wonder that the Government has pushed back on the United Nations and the African Union's work in Burundi.

We continue to watch Burma, where the security forces have allegedly conducted episodic acts of violence and repression against the ethnic Rohingya people, who already face widespread ethnic and religious discrimination from Governmental authorities and popular social movements, despite the human rights gains achieved throughout the country as a result of Burma's ongoing democratic transformation. Such treatment drives desperate people to flee to neighbouring countries at best, or to radicalization at worst.

Such allegations demand real and independent investigations as soon as possible. That is why we supported the recent establishment of an international fact-finding mission to look into these allegations. Frankly, there is hardly an issue on our agenda today that does not involve concerns about human rights, and future threats will continue to challenge us. That kind of violence is not inevitable, but if the Council fails to take human rights violations and abuses seriously, they can escalate into real threats to international peace and security. The Security Council cannot continue to be silent when it sees widespread violations of human rights. Why would we tell ourselves that we will only deal with questions of peace and security without addressing the factors that bring about the threats in the first place?

We should be ready to engage early and often in the statements that we make and in the measures that we impose. It is clear that the connection between human rights and security is a topic worthy of the Council's serious consideration. To be fair, over the years, the Security Council has addressed human rights issues in various ways. The Security Council has mandated many peacekeeping and political missions to monitor and report on human rights violations and abuses. Several Security Council-established sanctions regimes

include Syria's human rights violations or abuses as a criterion for adding individuals to travel-ban or assets-freeze lists. These are tangible and real impacts that show what the Council can achieve for human rights when we set our minds to it, but there is so much more that we can do.

The next international crisis could very well come from places in which human rights are widely disregarded. Perhaps, it will be North Korea, Iran or Cuba. We do not know where the next revolt against basic violations of humanity will come, but we know from history that they will come. When they do, the Security Council will be called upon to react. We are much better off acting on the front-end and standing for human rights before the absence of human rights forces us to react. It is past time for the Council to fulfil the mandate that it was given 72 years ago. It is past time that we dedicated ourselves to promoting peace, security and human rights.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the other members of the Council.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): We commend the United States for convening this meeting to consider the interlinkages between human rights and the prevention of armed conflicts.

More than 70 years ago, the Charter of the United Nations established the founding pillars of the United Nations system. Those are peace and security, human rights and free development. In today's globalized world, they are more topical than ever. Sustainable peace and security cannot be achieved in isolation from human rights. Human rights violations are not only a grave consequence of conflicts, but they are frequently the very reason that conflicts begin in the first place. In the past, we have seen rare instances in which the Security Council was able to establish that link between the danger of conflicts' eruption and human rights violations.

On 4 November 1956, the Security Council adopted resolution 120 (1956) on Hungary and the grave situation generated by the use of Soviet military forces to suppress the efforts of the Hungarian people to reassert their rights. The Council called an emergency special session of the General Assembly (see A/PV.564 to A/PV.573) so as to make the appropriate recommendations concerning the situation in Hungary. Remarkably, the Council's resolution could not be vetoed by the Soviet Union, which had voted against it. At that time, the Council succeeded in achieving a desired result by adopting the resolution through a procedural vote.

In contrast, the outbreak of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was utterly overlooked, and the Council did not heed the early signs of the impending tragedy. Almost a year before the genocide during the summer of 1993, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions depicted in great detail an alarming situation with genocide looming and stressed that "human rights must be the prime concern of any system for monitoring or implementing agreements" (*E/CN.4/1994/7/Add.1, para. 61*). However, the Council subsequently failed to respond to that warning until several months after the tragedy had already taken place.

Today, the whole world is observing the severe consequences of the crisis in Syria and the gross human rights violations committed by various parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies. Early warning signs of an imminent conflict were already very clear in 2011. However, the first draft resolution on the issue (S/2011/612) introduced by France, Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom, with a prominent human rights component, was vetoed on 4 October 2011. Fast forward six years — there is immense human suffering with hundreds of thousands dead, millions displaced and not even a hint of a light at the end of the tunnel.

Here is a final stroke to complete this grim picture. Action by the Security Council on the matter is immobilized by what now has amounted to eight uses of the veto. We can no longer apply a piecemeal approach to the issue of such fundamental importance for maintaining peace and security. It is time to look anew at the role and place of human rights in the work of the Council and take action.

Ukraine has consistently promoted the Human Rights Council resolution 24/16 on the role of prevention in ensuring and protecting human rights. Although the Human Rights Council is a designated United Nations venue for discussions on human rights issues, its ability to take practical and action-oriented decisions on matters relating to peace and security is obviously constrained. We must therefore recognize the

crucial implications that human rights violations have for peace and security, and it will be only natural for the Security Council to take the lead on this matter.

In 1992, following the end of the Cold War, the Council held its first summit meeting to discuss the responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects. At that time, the innate connection between the protection of human rights and the maintenance of peace and security appeared to be unquestionably understood and defended. Every Head of State or Government participating in the debate raised the issue of the Council's share of responsibility for, and role in the protection of, human rights.

At the summit, one world leader said:

> "I believe that these questions are not an internal matter of States, but rather their obligations under the United Nations Charter, international covenants and conventions. We want to see this approach become a universal norm. The Security Council is called upon to underscore the civilized world's collective responsibility for the protection of human rights and freedoms". (*S/PV.3046, p. 46*)

This would be a relatively banal quotation if not for the fact that those words, pronounced in this very Chamber, were those of the President of the Russian Federation. The speaker was President Yeltsin himself, and the meeting took place 25 years ago, on the last day of January 1992, the very first month of the Russian membership in the United Nations and in the Council. These words resonate to this day in their continued global relevance, just as they do in their irrelevance to the current political reality of the country in question.

In New York City, a street sign at the south-west corner of Third Avenue and 67th Street reads Sakharov-Bonner Corner, in honour of Mr. Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner. The corner is down the block from the Russian — formerly Soviet — Mission to the United Nations. Already in 1995 it was Yelena Bonner, testifying before the United States Congress, who said that all democratic ideals proclaimed in this very Chamber by President Yeltsin had been betrayed by the military assault on Chechnya.

Ever since, Russia has been striking a different chord, to the effect that the Security Council, the highest world authority to address conflicts and other threats to peace and security, should not consider human rights issues. What is more, human rights phobia has been spreading like a metastatic cancer beyond the Council to other parts of the United Nations body in New York. In November and then in December last year, consideration of human rights resolutions was challenged by a group of countries in the Third Committee, which, by its mandate, is obliged to address such issues.

Disrespect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law by authoritarian regimes with regard to their own citizens is aimed, inter alia, at ensuring impunity for themselves for internal civil wars, as is the case in Syria, or unaccountability for attempts to illegally annex foreign territories, as is the case with Russia's actions in Crimea and its military aggression in Donbas.

Three years have passed since Russia illegally occupied Crimea. The occupying authorities are committing massive, systematic violations of human rights and seeking to destroy the identity of Ukrainians and of the indigenous people of the peninsula, the Crimean Tatars, as well as that of other ethnic and religious groups. In its resolution 71/205, adopted in December 2016, the General Assembly reaffirmed that Crimean residents should enjoy protection under the Geneva Conventions and applicable human rights instruments.

One can find ample testimony to the crimes committed during the Russian aggression against Ukraine in the reports of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, which has been operating in my country for three years now, at the invitation of the Ukrainian Government. The request for the deployment of the mission was an immediate response by my Government to Russian aggression as an effort to prevent massive human rights violations. Since March 2014, the mission has issued 17 reports on the human rights situation and two thematic reports, including one on sexual violence in conflict in Ukraine.

Proper consideration of human rights violations in the context of the maintenance of peace and security may contribute to preventing the outbreak of armed conflict. If a conflict is already under way, addressing its human rights dimension may prevent the further escalation of violence and serve as a deterrent to conflict-related atrocities.

In the 1990s, the Security Council received 23 periodic reports on human rights violations in the

former Yugoslavia. The first peacekeeping operation in United Nations history with a mandate of protection of civilians was deployed to contribute to the resolution of the Balkan conflict. Therefore, we do not suggest anything new.

The human rights component should be an integral part of the Council's consideration of conflict resolution and management. When the Council looks into the issues of the occupation of Crimea and Russian military aggression in Ukrainian Donbas, the same approach should apply.

On the other side of the world, though still on the Russian border, there is another vivid case in point: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, presented in Geneva to the Human Rights Council, pointed to deficiencies in the public food-distribution system, restrictions on access to information, and violations of international labour standards concerning overseas workers. The report also expresses continuing concern over the grave situation in political prison camps and the unresolved cases of enforced disappearances, including the abduction of citizens of Japan and the Republic of Korea.

In the 1970s, human rights issues were removed from the agenda of New York and transferred to nice, cosy, sleepy Geneva. It was not only a physical move but, it appears, an ideological divorce of United Nations Headquarters from something that was then perceived as irreconcilably different from the security agenda of New York. It is time to reconcile these differences and to restore the integrity of the entire United Nations system as designed by its founders.

The Council has no right to repeat its failures in Rwanda, to continue to fail in Syria, or to remain paralysed by the Russian position in the case of Crimea and Donbas.

Of course, many things depend on the dedicated leadership of the United Nations — a leadership that would leave behind the years of apathy and neglect vis-à-vis the human rights dimension of security, and one that is fit to lead the Organization into a future in which human rights and human security are integral parts of the national security of each and every Member State.

To conclude, I would like to stress how much we are inspired by Secretary-General Guterres's vision and the approaches he has outlined to the issues suggested for discussion. We sincerely believe that the Secretary-General can skilfully manage all of the tools given him by the United Nations Charter and that he will not hesitate to use them whenever necessary to achieve the implementation of the Charter's goals and objectives.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks.

Our world is now facing turbulent times of instability, unpredictability and tensions. Multiplying conflicts interconnected with the threat of global terrorism and violent extremism, growing racism and xenophobia produce horrendous violations of human rights law and humanitarian law. We believe that these and other negative phenomena are consequences of the economic crisis, inequality, chronic poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, water and food insecurity, climate change, global competition and the imbalance in finance and trade. We therefore recognize that all three pillars of peace, development and human rights are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, as set out in resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262.

Kazakhstan fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to rebalance our approach to peace and security, and to make prevention a priority. From the very beginning of independence, our country has been following a course that is in full harmony with that initiative. In his manifesto, entitled *The World. 21st Century*, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan called on humankind to implement a strategy that will forever rid the world of the threat of war and eliminate the root causes of conflict. We also began to develop the 2045 global strategic initiative plan, which plans to launch by the United Nations centenary a new trend in global development, based on fair conditions, in which all nations have equal access to infrastructure, resources and markets. We must be equally aware that, in conflict prevention, all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, are indivisible and interdependent. We must ensure equal attention is paid to all of them.

The rights to decent work and adequate standards of living, housing, food, water and sanitation, health and education are at the core of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, which provides an ideal platform to demonstrate our commitment to human rights. We also need to invest in a sustainable world with basic services and protected human rights, by helping Member States to build capacity for more effective and accountable institutions, appropriate legislation, security and justice reform, by ending all impunity and by enhancing personnel competencies.

Human rights cannot be fostered in an environment of continuous military action. Human rights must be viewed through an impartial lens without double standards, and should not be used as a political tool. Indeed, the integrity and credibility of the Council will only be enhanced if it proceeds in a balanced and equitable manner with all Member States involved. We see that human rights are mentioned 15 times in the Charter of the United Nations, but not in Chapter VII, which implies that these rights cannot be forcibly imposed on States; rather they can be realized through diplomacy, mediation and inclusive dialogue.

We believe that the Human Rights Council, its mechanisms and procedures, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, play a key role in monitoring the observance of the human rights situation in all countries and have the appropriate mandate and experience to contribute to conflict prevention at an early stage. The Secretary-General undoubtedly plays a key role in the prevention of conflict and can, at any time, use his power under Article 99 of the Charter to bring to the attention of the Security Council any issue that could threaten international peace and security. The role of his Special Representatives and Envoys is also significant. Protecting civilians, especially against violence and sexual abuse inflicted on women and children, is a priority for my country, and we support the inclusion of these themes in the Security Council resolutions. It is also significant for the Council to give due thought to this factor, while formulating mandates of peacekeeping operations. Our discussions with troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as pre-deployment training in human rights and gender sensitivity are steps in the right direction. Kazakhstan is fully committed to multilateral action to support all human rights and to achieve peaceful coexistence and mutual respect in a world without conflicts.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Madam President, and your delegation for taking the initiative to hold this meeting. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing today. Our delegation stands ready to join and support him in his efforts to reform the Organization.

Freedom is the foundation essential to the full exercise of human rights. Freedom, understood in the broadest possible way, presupposes the ability of a person to choose their destiny. Choose their way of life. Choose their form of Government. Choose their leaders. Choose the person with whom they wish to share their life. Choose their religion. Choose to have a religion or not. Choose their education. Choose to procreate, and how to do so or not. Choose where to live. In short, choose their life. It is in that ability to choose that the rights of the person — human rights — as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, are developed.

Even where there is complete freedom, it is still necessary to safely ensure the movement from mere statements to the full exercise of those rights. However, we can categorically assert that where there is no freedom, human rights are violated entirely. Where there is no freedom, there will always be tensions that can lead to violent changes and the outbreak of conflict. In that regard, we reiterate once again that it is the responsibility of Governments to guarantee and to promote the enjoyment of human rights by the inhabitants of their countries, whether they be residents or persons in transit.

Uruguay is committed to the promotion and protection of, and respect for human rights, as a fundamental basis for sustaining fundamental freedoms and democratic life in all nations. Therefore, it does not recognize limits or exclusivity with regard to the forums in which human rights may be discussed. Moreover, it therefore does not accept the excuse of sovereignty or domestic jurisdiction in efforts to prevent the examination of the human rights situation in Member States.

To borrow the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, "sovereignty is threatened when leaders responsible for crimes against humanity go unpunished, and a culture of impunity feeds future cycles of violent instability across whole regions."

Uruguay is of the view that ensuring the protection of all human rights and peace is a precondition for the

sustainable development of countries. As expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

> "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. The new Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights... on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions" (*General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 35*).

The occurrence of violations and abuses of human rights certainly set the foundation for the emergence of conflicts. If we look for the root causes of the conflicts of today, in most cases we will find serious human rights violations. The systematic violation of human rights is inherent to conflicts, which, in turn, can threaten international peace and security.

Until now, the Council has generally reacted to such situations after the fact, once the events have already taken place. We therefore echo the words of the Secretary-General on the importance of emphasizing the prevention of conflicts, since we put so much energy and resources into dealing with those that arise rather than preventing their occurrence in the first place. In that context, we would like to mention the 13 June 2016 appeal in which a group of 69 countries, including Uruguay, demanded, through their missions in Geneva, that human rights be put at the heart of conflict prevention.

Today, the protection of human rights is part of the mandates of nine peacekeeping operations and five special political missions. In that regard, Uruguay believes that the human rights components in peace operations contribute to their effectiveness in achieving the purposes for which they were deployed. It is therefore appropriate that the Security Council should receive periodic reports on every situation, without exception, where there are serious human rights violations. The Council should give greater attention to signs, such as serious violations of human rights, that foreshadow the start or escalation of a conflict, because that is the only way it can take measures in time to prevent conflicts. The fact is that the sooner those signs are identified, the more time the Council will have to act in order to mitigate their possible consequences.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize the importance of the nexus in the cooperation and flow of information between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council through information procedures and mechanismsthat enable them to coordinate their actions within their respective mandates and develop the system's preventive capability. While they are clearly two independent organs with different functions, that should not be an obstacle to the importance of ensuring the complementarity of their work.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing.

It has been 70 years since the United Nations was established and its Charter adopted, laying a firm foundation for international cooperation in the Organization's three main areas of work: the maintenance of international peace and security, development and the protection and promotion of human rights. The Charter of the United Nations is not merely a legally binding international instrument. It was the product of harrowing human experience in the wake of the Second World War. With that in mind, the international community set out a series of purposes, principles and basic rules that were ultimately enshrined in the Charter, which soon became the most important source of *jus cogens* and a rulebook for joint international action.

The Charter entrusted the Security Council with a mandate to address exclusively situations that represent a threat to international peace and security, while tasking other organs and entities, notably the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, with strengthening States' commitment to human rights and developing principles for addressing human rights situations in Member States. In that regard, Egypt is troubled about the Security Council's continuing encroachment on the functions and prerogatives of the Assembly and other United Nations bodies, and about attempts to expand the Council's mandate by introducing issues that, according to the Charter, come under the core prerogatives of other bodies. We are also concerned about the fact that there are some who insist on using our shared goal of promoting human rights as a back door for interfering in the internal affairs of States and adding items that do not constitute a threat to international peace and security to the Council's agenda.

That does not mean that Egypt denies the intrinsic links between the three main pillars of the work of the United Nations, indeed, our belief in them is as strong as ever. However, finding ways to deal with the profound challenges of today's world while achieving the goal of promoting and protecting human rights requires a comprehensive approach based on genuine and constructive dialogue, international cooperation and the exchange of experiences and best practices. In that regard, we believe that the mechanisms and capacities of the Human Rights Council, especially the Universal Periodic Review, make it the best forum for States to engage in such constructive dialogue.

At this time of critical junctures of international challenges, we must work to strengthen the role of the United Nations in settling conflicts and building bridges to understanding and cooperation among nations, so that it is a melting pot of coexistence and mutual respect among different cultures. We believe that by using the relevant mechanisms, and without prejudice to the purposes and principles of the Charter, the United Nations can play its part in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity, while avoiding any politicization, bias, lack of objectivity, double standards or exploitation of the noble principles of human rights as a tool for selective targeting and narrow political interests. We therefore urge that all human rights issues be addressed equitably and fairly and in accordance with the relevant frameworks, so as to maintain the credibility of the United Nations.

In conclusion, the problems of our times — including polarization, decade-long conflicts, the spread of terrorism, mass refugee crises and illegal migration — are all the result of double standards, violations of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and false interpretations of them that serve only narrow self-interests. We wish to distance ourselves from any attempt to implicate the Security Council in fomenting that polarization, which could only undermine its mandate under the Charter.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to begin by thanking you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. Human rights are universal. As Governments, we are all obliged to promote and protect them. As former Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson often said — and I apologize for repeating something that we have all heard so many times —

> "There is no peace without development, no development without peace and neither peace nor development without respect for human rights".

As a tribute to him and a reminder to all of us, it is sometimes useful to go back to the preamble of this fantastic, inspiring book. Our founders were "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We repeat that here very often, but let us not forget that the text goes on

> "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in large freedom".

I could end there, but I do have a few more things to say.

First, the Human Rights Council is — as has been said here today — at the heart of the United Nations human rights architecture and deserves our full engagement. But human rights are also at the core of the Security Council's work. We see that in our discussions almost every day. Human rights have always played a role in its work. However, we should give greater attention and consideration to how they can be further integrated. The inherent link between the protection and promotion of human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security is clear and embodied in the Charter. Violations and abuses of human rights — civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural — can be drivers of conflict. Conversely, the respect for and protection of human rights contribute to addressing the root causes and drivers of instability, thereby helping to prevent and resolve conflicts and sustain peace.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. We fully support his commitment to human rights as an intrinsic part of the work of the United Nations across all its pillars. We fully agree that human rights are integral to successfully delivering on both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and resolution 2282 (2016). We are encouraged by the concrete measures that he has put in place that are aimed at strengthening the capacity of the system of the United Nations to detect and respond early to signs of looming crisis. In this regard, the Human Rights Up Front initiative is a useful example of an approach that cuts across the three pillars to deliver early and contextualized analysis focused on prevention.

The Security Council's approach to human rights has evolved over time. Over the past 10 years, we have seen a positive trend, with significant growth in human rights functions within peace operations. Human rights components are now central to almost all mandates of peace operations, which enhance their quality and effectiveness. That includes capacity-building for host nations and reporting to the Security Council. In February, Uruguay, Senegal and Sweden organized an Arria-formula meeting on human rights components in peace operations in order to learn from the experience to date and to discuss how to further strengthen this work.

Another positive development has been briefings from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on particular human rights situations. In addition, the Council has addressed human rights in relation to both thematic and country-specific concerns.

Improved cooperation with regional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, has contributed and can further contribute to a greater emphasis on human rights within the Council, including in peace operations. These organizations have clear objectives on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, not least as part of efforts for preventing conflicts. However, even if these are positive trends, then it is clear that we still need to do better.

Human rights are relevant to the work of the Security Council across all three phases of the conflict cycle: before, during and after. We need to step up in all three phases.

First, the primary responsibility for protecting the human rights of their populations lies with States. A failure to do so erodes trust within society and increases fear, suspicion and exclusion, sowing the seeds of instability and conflict. Some of the recurring causes of armed conflict relate to land ownership, language rights and minority rights. Monitoring respect for all human rights — civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights — must be an integral part of prevention. Responding early to violations and abuses of human rights can effectively prevent conflicts before they become a threat to regional and international peace and security.

Secondly, during conflicts, respect for international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, must be upheld. The trend is unfortunately the complete opposite. The correlation between conflict and discrimination against women has been established, making upholding women's human rights a security concern. Monitoring and reporting of all human rights during conflicts are crucial, including for the protection of civilians, schools and hospitals.

Human rights components must be standard in all peace operations. The protection and promotion of human rights should be a whole-of-mission approach. The integration of human rights into all aspects of peace operations, as well as in reports by the Secretary-General, should be strengthened. Human rights mandates decided upon by the Security Council must be adequately and sustainably funded.

Finally, human rights are essential for consolidating peace when emerging from conflict. Building sustainable and peaceful societies requires a comprehensive approach that brings together peace and security, sustainable development, gender equality and human rights. Just as a lack of respect for human rights can be a spur to conflict, a comprehensive human rights framework that ensures that the rights of all individuals and communities within a society are recognized and respected is critical to building sustainable peace. The United Nations, including peacekeeping operations, should better support efforts to strengthen national capacities, including on the rule of law. Ending impunity is also of key importance for reconciliation. Cultural impunity is a terrible trend.

The importance of ensuring accountability for human rights abuses and violations is relevant in all three phases. The Security Council must do better. There are numerous examples of where grave human rights violations have occurred and where early action by the Security Council could have made a difference. The failure to act fails the victims and undermines the legitimacy of the Council. We must also not forget the important role played by the International Criminal Court in this regard.

The Human Rights Council is the main United Nations human rights body. We absolutely agree with that. That should continue to be the case, and the Human Rights Council needs to have our full support in delivering on its mandate. It is equally clear that human rights are a critical aspect of the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. These are mutually reinforcing structures.

The mechanisms and special procedures of the OHCHR and the Human Rights Council's are an

independent and reliable source of information that the Security Council should make better use of in its work by, inter alia, inviting them to regularly brief the Council on urgent human rights related matters — before, during and after conflicts. Early warning mechanisms and relevant and independent information from the ground is crucial in order for the Security Council to effectively assess, prevent and respond to conflicts.

Briefings by the Secretariat to the Council should always include human rights as part of broader conflict analysis, drawing on the whole of the United Nations system to support the Council's decision-making.

Speaking in Geneva earlier this year, the Secretary-General told the Human Rights Council that "perhaps the best prevention tool we have is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the treaties that derive from it". If we are to fully live up to our responsibility to prevent conflict and maintain peace, human rights must be at the core of our business. We must and we can do better.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too would like to thank the Secretary-General for his participation in today's discussion.

The promotion and protection of human rights, along with the maintenance of peace and security and development issues, are fundamental activities of the United Nations.My statement contains the same quote from the Charter of the United Nations that has just been cited by the Permanent Representative of Sweden. I am glad that our delegations consider it equally relevant today. However, I am not sure that the rest of my statement will coincide with the comments we have just heard.

Over the years, the Organization has developed and operated a vast toolkit for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Security Council has never been and is not now a part of that toolkit, and this must be borne in mind when the Security Council raises certain issues relating to human rights. During the entire period of the existence of the United Nations, the members of the Security Council have avoided including the topic of human rights protection in its agenda. That is not accidental.

Various aspects of the issue are indeed present in the work of the Council. They are periodically addressed during thematic or country discussions. However, the Security Council is not intended to fulfill the tasks of ensuring the observance of human rights and is not adapted to a substantive analysis of the situation in this sphere. It is an organ with unique powers to make decisions, including those providing for the use of force in situations that pose a threat to peace, a breach of peace or an act of aggression. Under this mandate, the Council cannot serve as a forum for discussions about human rights situations, wherever they may be.

No international human rights instrument provides for the imposition of any oversight or other functions by the Security Council in this field. We cannot agree with the assertion made in the concept note prepared for the meeting, according to which violations of human rights should be considered as an issue related to the primary responsibility of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter.

The Council has only those powers with which member States endowed it. Seeking to go beyond those powers inevitably encroaches on the competence of States or other bodies of the United Nations system, each of which has its own tasks and role. The Security Council held meeting in August 2014 at which it adopted resolution 2171 (2014), on conflict prevention was adopted (see S/PV.7247). The permanent representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Churkin, commented on the discussion as follows:

> "Based on some of the proposals we have heard, one could conclude that many of the bodies and structures of the United Nations could be eliminated, with the exception of the Security Council" (*S/PV.7247, p. 20*).

It seems that such a conclusion would be relevant and applicable to today's meeting.

We share the fears of those who are concerned about the inclusion of human rights issues in the Security Council and how that inclusion might be an attempt, distorted through the lens of preventing risks to international peace and security, to acquire an instrument for exerting political and military pressure on other countries. The expansion of the human rights component within the Council will lead to further criticism. That criticism would be quite justified on the grounds of its going beyond its mandate, its politicization and the double standards in its work, which, in sum, undermines trust in the Security Council itself.

Conflict prevention is an important issue in the context of maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, without guaranteeing sustainable peace and security and successful conflict prevention, it is impossible to ensure respect for human rights. It is impossible to work effectively on the promotion and protection of such rights where blood is shed and civilians die. The prevention and settlement of armed conflict are the main prerequisites for correcting human rights situations, and not vice versa.

We do not share the approach of considering human rights violations as the main precondition for armed conflict or human rights protection as a key instrument for preventing them or as a panacea. Practice demonstrates otherwise. The goal of conflict prevention is completely contrary to interfering in the domestic affairs of countries and undermining their sovereignty, often under the pretext of protecting human rights. Such examples abound. In recent years, we have seen similar tragedies in Iraq, Libya and elsewhere. They result in serious crises, the destabilization of entire regions, a rise in terrorist threats and the creation of large areas of chaos and violence, where it is impossible to guarantee not only political and economic rights, but even the basic right to life.

The main responsibility for preventing armed conflicts and for promoting and protecting human rights lies with States. The goal of the United Nations is to foster cooperation that improves the international legal base and facilitates the establishment and development of the potential of State institutions, while respecting their sovereignty and the division of labour within the Organization itself. Our delegation supports the opinion that it is important to have goals for conflict prevention and for guaranteeing human rights. What we cannot accept, however, is the proposed interpretation of the link between them and far-reaching conclusions based on an artificial construct. In our opinion, the best contribution that the members of the Security Council could make to protect human rights is that of working effectively, in accordance with the Council's mandate to guarantee international peace and security.

In conclusion, as usual, I would like to make some comments on the statement made by the representative of Ukraine. It was a good confirmation of our message that attempts would inevitably be made to politicize the Council's debate on human rights and use it to achieve goals very different from the objectives of the discussion. It perpetuates the propaganda and information campaign against Russia and is aimed at implanting genuine hatred for everything Russia-related in Ukraine, and is a clear illustration of the practice of double standards.

The Government of Ukraine has been seriously criticized by United Nations structures — including the Monitoring Mission, which the representative of Ukraine mentioned — and by non-governmental organizations for blatantly violating human rights. The relevant reports cite illegal arrests, forced disappearances, the torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners and sexual violence towards them, some cases of the authorities and radical nationalists pressuring the judiciary, a lack of progress in investigating the tragedies in Odessa and other atrocious crimes, with Ukrainian authorities conniving with radical nationalist groups, further restrictions on freedom of expression, the exclusion of the Russian language — which is a native language for million of Ukrainians — from the media, and imposing a genuine economic blockade in the eatern regions of the country. The list goes on, but the Ukrainian delegation preferred to remain silent on those facts.

With regard to Crimea, I would like to assure the Council that, fortunately, in that Russian region people are living peaceably and any issues relating to armed conflict are not at all relevant to Crimea. Equally irrelevant are the insinuations that were made about some human rights issues on the peninsual since its reunification with Russia. As for the Crimean Tatars, for more than 20 years of its independence Ukraine has done nothing to improve their situation, despite numerous recommendations from international human rights mechanisms. It is only now that Kyiv has become an active advocate of their rights at the international level, trying to use that issue to advance its own political agenda.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank you, Mad. m President, for organizing today's briefing and for the flexibility shown to ensure that members of the Security Council agreed to proceed with today's debate.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

As our Swedish colleague stated earlier, from its inception the United Nations has reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person. Accordingly, promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms for all, without distinction, has been one of the purposes of the United Nations. That, among other important factors, is considered imperative for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being that are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations. It is also worth mentioning that, as was stated in the 2005 World Summit outcome, development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The Summit outcome also stressed the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights, meaning economic, social and political and civil rights. It further states that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.

In that regard, there is no better embodiment of that refined notion of human rights than the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its motto of leaving no one behind. Therefore, there is no major disagreement on the importance of respect for human rights, conceived as in the foregoing, in fostering peace and stability. In the light of the evolution of the nature of conflicts, there is indeed a growing recognition that the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms contributes positively to reinforcing peace and stability, while their wanton disregard and violation leads to more instability and chaos. That is why the Council has been giving increasing attention to human rights issues in the context of addressing the challenges and threats to international peace and security.

As the concept note has rightly indicated, the Security Council has been receiving briefings on human rights issues as part of its consideration of country-specific situations and thematic issues, including the protection of civilians, human trafficking, children in armed conflict, women and peace and security, among others. A number of important decisions have resulted from those discussions, which continue to guide the work of the Council in terms of the linkages between human rights and peace and security.

Many peacekeeping and special political missions have also been mandated to monitor and report on human rights situations. That notwithstanding, it seems to us self-evident that the protection and the promotion of human rights do not fall within the purview of the Security Council. In other words, the Council considers them only insofar as they relate to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The primary organ within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and the protection of human rights, addressing situations of human rights violations and promoting the effective coordination and mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system is indeed the Human Rights Council.

Human rights issues also constitute an important part of the work of the Third Committee of the General Assembly, which among others examines human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and adopts numerous draft resolutions submitted under the human rights agenda item during its annual session. Therefore, we believe that the Security Council should remain focused on carrying out its mandated responsibilities, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations and not encroach on the powers and functions of other organs of the United Nations. Replicating the work of these organs will not only be inconsistent with the principles of the Charter, but will also create unnecessary division and discord. At a time when the Council is not able even to find common ground in addressing the most pressing issues of international peace and security, that will further undermine its ability to effectively carry out its primary responsibility.

Of course, we cannot ignore the need for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Human Rights Council and other United Nations human rights mechanisms in carrying out their mandates, but the responsibility for that falls within the mandate of other principal organs of the United Nations, most of all the General Assembly. Needless to say, the discussions on human rights issues have always tended to be ideological, and their susceptibility to politicization and the lack of the consistency and coherence in dealing with human rights situations makes it extremely difficult to build the necessary consensus within the wider membership of the United Nations. But the solution is not to replace the functions of those other organs and mechanisms, but to improve and strengthen them so that they can effectively deliver on their mandated responsibilities.

However, that does not mean that the Security Council should remain indifferent to grave instances of human rights violations and crimes against humanity. The Council should be able to use all of the wide range of tools at its disposal to respond in a timely and effective manner to situations that endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, the track record of the Security Council in that regard is far

from reassuring, and that has been the subject of much political and academic debate for quite some time. It is undoubtedly overdue for the Council to start being more self-critical.

In terms of the way forward, the Security Council would best be served in dealing with human rights situations by enhancing its constructive and complementary relations with other principal bodies of the United Nations and by taking advantage of their tools and expertise. But, as so clearly indicated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), the general principle to be adhered to is the need for all to work within their respective mandates, and the role of the Secretary-General should also not be overlooked. He may draw the attention of the Security Council to massive and systematic human rights abuses on the basis of his sole analysis and assessment of specific human rights situations, but with full awareness of the need to respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, as well as the principles of international law governing inter-State relations.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): We welcome to the Security Council today the Secretary-General, whose presence today is as important as it is appreciated.

Human rights violations that stir up hatred are the direct cause of tensions and violence, sometimes to the point of destabilizing entire countries and regions. That is why the Security Council has already developed measures to prevent abuses and protect human rights within the framework of its mandate as the guarantor of international peace and security. Today's important debate, for which I thank the American presidency, offers us a welcome opportunity to reflect on how to strengthen the Council's action as early as possible in crises but also during conflicts, so as to prevent, protect and sanction, which are essential tools for preserving, restoring and sustaining peace.

The link between human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security is clear, and the Security Council experiences that fact on a daily basis. In Syria, six years ago, it all began with the outrageous violation of the dignity and freedom of young adolescents in the town of Dar'a. Those massive violations of human rights by Bashar Al-Assad — violations of the freedoms to demonstrate and peacefully assemble, as well as torture and enforced disappearances — have led to the conflict that we see today, one that is destabilizing the entire region. Bashar Al-Assad continues to be guilty of serious crimes by reasoning erroneously that he will be able, through total repression, to put an end to a situation that he himself created. Our responsibility is to put an end to the headlong rush forward that confronts us. France has long acted to enable the Security Council to assume human rights responsibilities in order to maintain international peace and security. In that regard, the Security Council has been constantly innovating on at least four levels.

First, the Council has adopted mandates for peacekeeping operations and special political missions that enable them to document violations and assist the authorities in the areas of the rule of law, security and justice, in particular in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. Peacekeeping operations must continue to have the means to fully and effectively implement those mandates. They have a duty to serve as an example. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's stepped-up efforts, in particular his zero-tolerance policy with respect to sexual abuse. The Security Council has also used its sanctions regimes to list individuals responsible for violating human rights, as is the case, for example, with respect to the Democratic Republic of Congo. That aspect needs to be strengthened.

Secondly, the Council has established specific mechanisms for children's rights and women's rights. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Security Council Working Group on the subject have made considerable progress over the past 15 years, including in situations that were not on the Council's agenda. France has always been a leader in that field and has been at the forefront of the international community's efforts, which my country remobilized on 21 February 2017 with the adoption of the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. We thank Sweden for chairing the Working Group. We pay tribute to Leila Zerrougui and have no doubt that Virginia Gamba will carry out her mission with as much conviction and efficiency as her predecessor. Considerable progress has been made in the protection and participation of women since resolution 1325 (2000). The women and peace and security agenda can still — and still needs to — move forward.

Thirdly, the Council has played its part in the fight against impunity, which must be eliminated in

order to ensure lasting peace. It supported the creation of the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic, which enables Central Africans to assume their responsibilities. In a complementary way, when nothing can be done at the national level, the Rome Statute provides for the possibility of the Security Council making referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In the case of Syria, as we know, France's proposal to seize the ICC with that issue came up against the veto. We cannot agree to leave it at that. Recent experience has shown that the right to veto cannot be an unconditional privilege, if our Council is to be able to fulfil its responsibilities fully, especially in the face of mass crimes. That is the meaning of the initiative launched by France and Mexico on limiting the use of the veto. Some 99 States support the initiative today, and the movement continues. Finally, the Council has established a useful dialogue with human rights bodies in various formats. Our exchanges could be more frequent.

In order to allow the Security Council to play a more effective role, France proposes to work on several tracks. The first track is to have the briefings of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General integrate more systematically and more comprehensively information on human rights situations gathered by the peacekeeping operations and the teams of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The second track is for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to speak as often as necessary in the Security Council on human rights violations that could be warning signs, the causes of conflict or factors aggravating an already evident crisis. That is imperative with respect to Burundi, where the calls for violence and the cases of torture and rape relayed this morning by the High Commissioner are of deep concern to us.

The third track is the search for more synergy with the Human Rights Council, a body to which France is very attached. The Security Council should not be sealed off from the work of the Human Rights Council, which the General Assembly has made the principal United Nations organ for protecting those rights. Special procedures such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic must have formal access to the Security Council in order to alert us and advise us as to our actions.

Finally, the Security Council's field visits must serve as an opportunity for it to establish systematic contacts with civil society and human rights defenders. The Security Council devoted an important share of its latest visit to the Lake Chad Basin to that endeavour.

The protection of human rights is part and parcel of the responsibilities of the Security Council in the peaceful settlement of disputes and in responding to a threat against peace or a breach of the peace. In failing to protect human rights at all stages of a conflict, the Security Council cannot effectively fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security. That is an essential component of both its effectiveness and its legitimacy. Indeed, that shows how obvious are the links between international peace and security, on the one hand, and human rights violations, on the other, and how timely is the thematic meeting that we are holding today.

In the same vein, the Council must be able to address humanitarian challenges when they are consequent to or fuel conflicts. Accordingly, France is very concerned about the resurgence of famine situations in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. We would like to see the Security Council consider that topic, and we propose as a first step that an Arria Formula meeting be held during the next several weeks.

Human rights are our best guide in our efforts to ensure lasting peace and international security. The initiative of the Secretary-General for lasting peace and the deliberations underway on peacekeeping are convergent. We must continue that effort within the Security Council so as to strengthen crisis prevention and lasting peace.

Let us therefore meet that challenge together.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting by the United States presidency to discuss human rights and the prevention of conflicts. The Senegalese delegation would also like express its appreciation for the opportunity to hear the statement by Secretary-General António Guterres, whose commitment to the promotion and the protection of human rights needs no introduction, as was shown by his very informative briefing.

The Senegalese delegation fully agrees with the three essential points that the Secretary-General made earlier. Your initiative, Madam, has enabled us to

relaunch this fascinating and often impassioned debate, which has hardly been exhausted, among members of the Security Council on the links, tenuous though they may appear, between human rights and peace and security, as well as on the role that the Security Council can and must play in ensuring the respect of human rights through prevention when necessary. It is therefore fortunate that you have included this thematic debate under an existing and important agenda item of the Security Council, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security in its connection with human rights and the prevention of conflicts.

My delegation hopes that our discussions today will result, if not in a consensus, at least in a clearer idea and shared vision with regard to the existing links between security, peace and human rights, as well as the role that the various organs of the United Nations system must play through complementarity and synergy, the respective prerogatives and mandates of which have been made clearly identifiable in the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations practices in response to the unfortunate development of threats and conflicts. That has become all the more possible since, as human rights issues have been addressed for the past 25 years, the role of the Council in examining those issues as they relate to international peace and security has become more clear, particularly within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the recommendations in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), and resolution 2282 (2016) on the international peacebuilding architecture, security and peacebuilding, in particular through the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is in such a spirit that my country, Senegal, approaches today's meeting, bearing in mind the premise that human rights are one of the three pillars of United Nations activities and are mentioned seven times in the Charter. But it is clear that we must respect the mandates of each organ with regard to human rights, in particular those of the General Assembly and its Human Rights Council and those of the many committees, without, of course, forgetting the role of the Secretary-General through his various Special Representatives on thematic issues, including those relating to children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, and the prevention of genocide.

I can also cite the United Nations Development Group's human rights mainstreaming mechanism with its credo "Human Rights Up Front". There are also the 16 peacekeeping operations, of which 10 include a human rights element that is more or less well structured. But all of that would be ineffective, if each of the bodies were to work in an isolated manner at a time when everyone agrees that we need more synergies and complementarity, as expressed in the title of the "One United Nations" initiative. In that regard, we anxiously await the decisions of the Secretary-General concerning the reorganization of the Secretariat.

We note another caveat concerning respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States while working towards the promotion and protection of human rights.

Given all of those functional prerogatives, the tragic turn of many internal conflicts in several areas of the world has led the Council in the distant and recent past to act when such situations characterized by massive human rights violations have threatened international peace and security, because they risk resulting in massive refugee flows towards international borders and consequent border violations.

We recall the terrible events that led, for example — and there are many other examples — to the adoption of resolution 688 (1991) on the question of the Iraqi Kurds and resolution 693 (1991), which established the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador with an ambitious human rights mandate, including monitoring, the monitoring, promotion and investigation of human rights violations. In the same year, the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter were not violated when the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was invited to participate in the Council's deliberations. Since then, according to statistics, the Council has hosted 15 such briefings.

Many other resolutions have resulted from discussions on human rights in the Council, such as those concerning South Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as those concerning Liberia and Sierra Leone. I am charting out this history to remind members that the issue is not a new one and that it has given rise in the past to edifying examples of cooperation between various bodies of the United Nations on more than one occasion, situations in which the Human Rights Council, for example, established a commission of inquiry and transmitted its findings to the General Assembly, which, in turn, adopted a

resolution recommending that the Security Council follow the advice of the commission of inquiry. That seems to us to be the kind of cooperation that should be encouraged, in the spirit of one United Nations.

I would also like to welcome the definition and granting by the Council of mandates for human rights protection in 10 of the 16 peacekeeping operations as well as in five special political missions, which demonstrates its resolve to contribute to respect for and the effectiveness of these rights, in particular in times of conflict.

Thus, aware of the gravity of the issue of human rights protection in armed conflict, the Council has incorporated the rights of women and children into its work by applying to peacekeeping the concepts of gender equality and of the preservation of the best interests of the child. These various mechanisms are complemented by that of sanctions, and one criterion for sanctions designation is human rights violations. The Council will also recall the various reports submitted to the Security Council containing recommendations aimed at strengthening human rights protection, which include the one I mentioned earlier.

Let us make no mistake: these gains, remarkable though they may be, are still fragile and must be carefully safeguarded from the ever-increasing threats and challenges we currently face. Indeed, the current juncture demands that on a daily basis we consider the links between crises, armed conflicts and human rights violations. But even beyond such conflicts and violations, we must also address the issues of poverty, food insecurity, health crises, environmental problems and climate change, which pose equally significant threats to peace and security. It is therefore vital to take into account all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural, so as to ensure an effective international peace and security.

It is for that reason that the Council, in addition to underlining in its decisions that the three pillars of the Organization — peace and security, human rights and development — are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

Concerning the increasing number of major human rights violations, especially in conflict situations, by both State and non-State actors — including, unfortunately, extremist and terrorist groups — we must work together in a concerted manner and with greater resolve to put an end to such acts. It is therefore important that, as independent and sovereign Member States, we invest sufficiently in all of these different issues, including the human rights issue, on the basis of mutual respect and a constructive dialogue.

While one of the main objectives of United Nations peacekeeping missions is to put an end to conflicts, it is also vital, in our view, to prevent crises and build peace and development on a solid foundation. That is why my country, Senegal, would like to reiterate its plea for better prevention based on robust, reliable alert systems and the necessary open cooperation between all stakeholders, in particular within subregional and regional organizations such as the African Union, which has its own African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has a Protocol on good governance, the rule of law and electoral processes. We would also like to underscore the commitment of ECOWAS, which on a number of occasions has worked together with the United Nations and demonstrated its proactivity through good offices, as was the case with the resolution of the crisis in Burkina Faso, or through preventive deployment, such as in Liberia in 1990 and Sierra Leone in 1997, and, more recently, in the Gambia.

Furthermore, United Nations human rights mechanisms that monitor and report on human rights, including the Human Rights Council, with its Universal Periodic Review and organs created under international instruments, form a basis that is useful, despite needing some fine-tuning, for addressing human rights issues.

Therefore, the Human Rights Council could, through the General Assembly if necessary, draw the attention of the Security Council to situations that may lead to conflict. Bearing in mind the importance of the post-conflict phase in crisis recurrence, it seems to us wise to take into account the promotion and protection of human rights in efforts at peacebuilding and bringing about a sustainable peace. My delegation therefore believes that high priority should be accorded to the right to development, given the various principles involved, which include equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and responsibility, as well as cooperation, in particular at the international level.

Finally, human rights protection can also serve as a confidence-building measure among parties to a conflict involved in negotiations on the conclusion of agreements, either peace agreements or cessation-of-

hostilities agreements. This is a clear reflection of their relevance in terms of defining political strategies.

Human rights is a cross-cutting issue that runs through the whole of the United Nations system, including in the work of the Security Council. Thus Senegal is of the view that we need to create conditions for a stronger international cooperation on human rights that is effective in times of conflict and times of peace and would make better, synergetic use of the many relevant mechanisms, in the framework of an approach that combines universality, interdependence, impartiality and objectivity.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for having called this important debate. I welcome the clear Security Council support for discussing this issue. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and strongly agree with all of it.

The United Kingdom is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is a cornerstone of peace, stability and security and a tool for conflict prevention. The Security Council has a clear role to play. This is necessary in order for us to do the job that the United Nations Charter gave us. It is absolutely not encroachment, for the reasons the Secretary-General so eloquently set out.

Too often, after a conflict, the international community looks back and concludes that more should have been done at the outset and that warning signs had not been acted upon. All too often those warning signs involve human rights violations and abuses.

Twenty-five years ago, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions reported on allegations of killings in Rwanda. A year later, his successor visited Rwanda and later warned the Commission on Human Rights of his fears of potential genocide. We all know now the consequences of the international community not responding decisively to those concerns.

Today the international community is being asked the same questions and given similar warnings in South Sudan. We need to come up with better answers.

The situation in Syria also shows the clear connection between human rights violations and conflict. A regime faced in 2011 by peaceful protests from its people responded not with reform but with repression and violence. We have seen where this has led: a civil war, a huge rise in violent extremism, death and forced disappearances, a refugee crisis, regional instability and even the use of chemical weapons against civilians.

The story of Masri, a Syrian man is, sadly, just one example. He was arrested after participating in a peaceful protest at the start of the conflict. He was tortured, starved and interrogated over two years in four detention facilities and then taken to a regime hospital that has been described as a slaughterhouse. A rare survivor, he was taken back to the notorious Sednaya prison for another year of torture. He was eventually released, but when he returned home, he screamed at his own reflection in the mirror: he had not recognized himself — a ghostly skeleton of a human standing where he had once stood. That is an illustration of why repeated abuses of the veto in the Council, to block accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses in Syria, are so damaging. They reinforce the Syrian regime's certainty that it can get away with carrying out gross violations of human rights with impunity.

The United Kingdom will continue to do its utmost to hold accountable the perpetrators of all such violations and abuses. That is why the United Kingdom also welcomes the Secretary-General's continued focus on prevention. That includes his support for his predecessor's Human Rights Up Front initiative, which seeks to bring the United Nations system together, prioritizes human rights and promotes joint work on cross-cutting issues. It also seeks to ensure that the United Nations does all it can, not just to respond to, but to prevent serious violations or abuses of human rights. We have seen time and time again how detrimental those are to peace and security.

Two institutions of the United Nations are particularly vital to delivering this joined-up approach to human rights. First, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office provide invaluable support to United Nations peacekeeping operations. They advise on mandates. They carry out strategic assessment missions to South Sudan, Liberia and Mali. They send technical and operational support missions to Iraq and Kosovo, to name just a few from the last year. We welcome the interaction between the Council and the High Commissioner and his Office.

The second is the Human Rights Council. Like many others, we are concerned when countries with

poor human rights records get on to the Human Rights Council. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Council plays a central role in responding to human rights violations that pose imminent threats to peace and security. Every country, including the worst offenders, has a Universal Periodic Review. Each has to explain policies and actions. The United Kingdom particularly values the role the Human Rights Council plays in overseeing the Special Rapporteurs and other investigative mechanisms, such as commissions of inquiry. Crucially, for the work of the Council, these vital tools help provide objective and professionally gathered information on how potential or active conflicts are evolving.

Human rights are intertwined with so much of what the Council does. The United Kingdom welcomes this debate. The Council cannot fully discharge its responsibility, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and security without addressing human rights every single day.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this very timely debate. It is difficult to believe that this is the first time the Council is discussing human rights outside of the context of a specific human rights situation or peacekeeping operation. However, there is always a first time for everything in life.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Today's meeting actually fits perfectly with our holistic vision of security, in which peace, sustainable development and the respect for human rights reinforce one another. That is also consistent with the growing attention the Council devotes to human rights with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. There are different opinions as to whether human rights falls within the scope of Council action. While fully respecting the different mandates of relevant United Nations bodies, it is hard to deny the crucial relevance of human rights in daily conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict scenarios.

With respect to prevention, human rights abuses are often the most effective warning sign of instability, especially when they escalate into atrocity crimes. Many examples have already been highlighted by my colleague in the Council. I would just like to raise an example. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) demonstrated that increasing levels of domestic violence and the vulnerability of women to gender-based violence, within and outside the home, often reflected growing tensions and militarization in a society. Such issues can be a valuable indicator and source of information if used as part of an early warning mechanism for preventive action.

Turning to conflict management, human rights violations are often among the root causes of conflict and almost invariably constitute one of its most prominent aspects. That is particularly true today, with non-State armed groups resorting to gross human rights violations in war. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and its affiliates, for instance, are using sexual violence as a terrorist tactic to advance their strategic and ideological objectives. That is why the Council is recognizing the victims of sexual violence as victims of terrorism. Children are increasingly employed as soldiers. For that reason, the Council has the Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict.

During Italy's previous term in the Security Council in 2008, the Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008), which was the first to recognize the connection between international security and sexual violence. Today, we should look into the trafficking of human beings, as well as trafficking in and the destruction of cultural heritage as ways to undermine the fundamental rights of individuals and communities with respect to long-term conflict and instability.

With regard to post-conflict situations, the Security Council has often been mindful of human rights violations when articulating its response, deciding peacekeeping operations mandates or adopting sanctions. Against that backdrop, notwithstanding the primary responsibility of States to respect human rights, we believe that the Council has a role to play, in synergy with United Nations bodies tasked with the monitoring of human rights, in particular the Human Rights Council. In that regard, allow me to make some operational suggestions.

First, prevention requires information. The Security Council should, together with the Human Rights Council and other involved actors, devise a more systematic use of human rights-related information as an early-warning mechanism and a crucial element in sustainable, long-term armed-conflict prevention efforts. Only when the issue becomes second nature can we be equipped to effectively prevent and tackle crisis situations. We support the Human Rights Up Front initiative, which aimed to establish a change in

mind set, to mainstream human rights in all our work, including that of the Security Council, as well as in the Framework of Analysis, which aims to assess the risk of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing, from an early-warning perspective.

We therefore believe that information provided to the Council by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, is extremely useful to better tackle crises we already follow and to obtain meaningful insight into countries that are not on the agenda of the Security Council. Since situations may deteriorate and escalate into violence, they should brief the Council on a more regular basis. Like other countries, Italy has joined the declaration on the reinforcement of cooperation between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. It is one of the objectives for our candidature to the Human Rights Council for the 2019-2021 term. For instance, we would welcome regular briefings by the President of the Human Rights Council to the Security Council.

Two other informative tools at the disposal of the Council are visiting missions and the Arria formula. Visiting missions should include a human rights focus, as was the case last March when the mission to the Lake Chad basin monitored the human rights situation of displaced people, women, children, and victims of sexual violence. I was there and was truly affected by what I witnessed. That formula provides the Council with additional information and interaction with civil society. We look forward to the meeting with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic to be held this Friday.

Turning now to the second operational measure, when reacting to conflict the Security Council should provide peacekeeping operations with a strong human-rights mandate. As is often the case, sanctions or other tools are used to address persistent patterns of human rights violations. We support the inclusion of sexual violence as a separate criterion for sanctions in the most recent renewal of sanctions in the Central African Republic. A more systematic use of sanctions, rather than a case-by-case basis, against individuals that have committed gross human rights violations could be also a strong deterrent in preventing new atrocities.

Lastly, with regard to accountability for the most serious crimes, this kind of action may seem to come too late after conflicts erupt and large-scale crimes are committed. However, if the Council acts consistently in bringing perpetrators to justice, justice itself can become a relevant and decisive tool for preventing human rights violations. Useful examples of such an approach can be found in the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, established by the Council, and of course in the work of the International Criminal Court. Accountability for the crimes committed in Syria should be established and their perpetrators brought to justice. We understand that at times Member States feel that such efforts are a form of interference and undermine national sovereignty. But what really threatens State sovereignty is violence and conflict, and the Council also has to help Member States to prevent them from recurring.

In conclusion, is there any situation on the agenda of the Security Council that does not include serious violations of human rights? The Council has a wide array of tools at its disposal for maintaining peace and security and preventing and responding to gross human rights violations, including the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, and the French-Mexican initiative on restraint in the use of the veto. Ultimately, the Security Council's unity is the crucial factor in achieving its core objective, the protection of civilians.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to join my colleagues in thanking the Secretary-General for his enlightening briefing today and, of course, affirming our full support to him in his efforts regarding the prevention of conflict.

As I was listening to my colleagues I found myself envisioning the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an international document that has become vital to respect for human dignity, emphasizing the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and progressivity of human rights as an essential part of international law. Development, peace and human rights, as we have seen, are also closely linked and interdependent. Since the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community has agreed on a number of international norms — such as the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights — and we have gone even further than

that, recognizing collective rights such as the right to peace and to development, which are not spoken of as much as they once were, and the right to a healthy, clean environment.

Today, human rights represent one of the fundamental pillars in the multilateral arena in which we work. Clearly, a number of situations that the Security Council has to address are connected to it, owing to its cross-cutting nature. And that is the case with the various peacekeeping operations and special political missions whose mandates include human rights issues. We consider it crucial to ensure that civilian, police and military personnel all act within a framework of absolute respect for human rights and for the local population, as well as any third parties involved. We should also emphasize the importance of those missions for promoting, evaluating, monitoring and protecting human rights. We therefore firmly condemn any form of sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation or other activity that violates the dignity and freedom of the people in areas where United Nations military, police or civilian personnel are deployed.

Every mission has its own particularities. It is important to analyse them on a case-by-case basis in order to decide whether it is relevant to include human rights issues in their mandates. The approach in that regard will depend on the various contexts affecting each individual situation, which means that there is no single formula that applies to all missions.

While human rights cut across the issues we address, it is important to remember that the Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is not supposed to concern itself with generally promoting the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In that regard, the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/251 of 3 April 2006, reaffirmed the universality and indivisibility of human rights and created the Human Rights Council as the principal United Nations entity responsible for promoting universal respect for their protection. The resolution also recognized the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-discrimination in considering human rights issues, of eliminating double standards and avoiding politicization.

The Human Rights Council also serves as a forum for dialogue on all human rights issues and is the main arena for dealing with human rights violations, including serious and systematic ones. We would like to highlight the Universal Periodic Review process, which so far is the only universal mechanism enabling every country to inform the international community about its fulfilment of its human rights obligations and commitments within a framework of objectivity and access to reliable information, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia affirms the views of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which brings together 120 States Members of our Organization — almost two-thirds of the membership — as expressed in a recently issued communiqué that outlines the Movement's position taken at its latest Summit. I will read out some paragraphs in English, the language that it was originally issued in. The group of the Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement

(*spoke in English*)

> "[r]eiterates its concern over the continuing encroachment by the Security Council on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council through addressing issues which traditionally fall within the competence of the latter organs, and the attempts to enter areas of norm-setting, administrative and budgetary matters and establishing definitions which fall within the purview of the Assembly; further expresses concern over the constant attempts by the Security Council to use some thematic issues under its consideration, including those related to human rights, to expand its mandate into areas which do not pose a threat to international peace and security and further urges the Council to confine to its mandate in accordance with the charter provisions;
>
> "Reaffirms its commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights without discrimination and underlines that democracy, sustainable development and the respect of all human rights, civil and political; economic, social and cultural rights, in their universal, indivisible and interdependent character, including the right to development, are all closely related and mutually reinforcing;
>
> "Reaffirms that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually

reinforcing, and that the international community should support the strengthening and promotion of democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world, without distinction between developed and developing countries, in compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter;

"Opposes and stops ongoing attempts to shift issues under the agenda of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council to the Security Council, and the encroachment by the latter on the functions and powers of the Assembly;

"Reaffirms that all organs and bodies of the United Nations should carry out only those tasks which are established in their respective mandates; in that regard, it reiterates that the principal United Nations organs have distinct and separate roles in accordance with the United Nations Charter;

"Opposes the ongoing practice by the Security Council of dealing with human rights issues which do not pose a threat to international peace and security and calls on the Security Council to respect its mandate as outlined in the United Nations Charter;

"Rejects the use of the Security Council as a tool to pursue national political interests and agendas, aggravating rather than alleviating situations contrary to its mission as enshrined in the Charter, and stresses the necessity of non-selectivity, impartiality and accountability in the work of the Council, and the need for the Council to strictly keep within the powers and functions accorded to it by the Member States under the United Nations Charter;

"Rejects the ongoing practice of the Security Council of dealing with human rights issues in pursuit of certain States' political objectives."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

That is the end of the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is not that we do not want to discuss the topic of human rights. Rather, we want to discuss it in a forum in which the membership agrees on the topic. We want a much more democratic and transparent forum than the Security Council. I understand that some permanent members of the Security Council insist on examining the topic in this Council because they have been here over the past decades and they will remain here for a long time. However, that is not the case for the two-thirds of the Organization's membership represented in the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like to cite the example of a NAM press release and its contents. It seeks to avoid the politicization of certain topics. For example, the General Assembly has adopted tens of resolutions callign for an end to the economic, financial and trade embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, stating that the embargo causes suffering in the Cuban population and that it limits the exercise of certain rights. However, I think that in the area of human rights, Cuba has made great strides in the promotion of certain rights. The fact that the issue is politicized and that some countries are singled out on the issue makes it impossible to have a frank discussion on the topic.

Bolivia has signed almost all international standards of human rights. It is signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Rome Statute. In addition, Bolivia has also invited the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to actively work in the country and monitor activities and the status of human rights in Bolivia.

I ask the Council: How many countries have ratified that many human rights instruments? How many have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child? How many have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights? How many have ratified the Rome Statute? We believe that one way to guarantee the exercise of human rights is to join together in ratifying such instruments in order to ensure their universality.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing today.

Conflict prevention and resolution are the sacred responsibility entrusted to the Security Council by the Charter of the United Nations. Given the new developments in the international context, causes of conflicts across the world are becoming more complex and diverse, with different, intertwined factors. As a

result, the ideas and means for conflict resolution must also evolve in order to be systematic, comprehensive and targeted. I wish to make the following observations.

First, efforts should be focused on building a more favourable international environment for conflict prevention. The target for conflict prevention is to build a world with universal security. However, the security of individual countries is interdependent. No nation can seek absolute security on its own and no country can harvest stability from turmoil in other countries. All nations must establish the concept of a common, shared future and advocate for a global governance concept based on the principle of engaging wider consultation, making joint contributions and shared benefits in order to build a global partnership based on dialogue and partnership rather than confrontation and alliances. We need to insist on common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and carry it throughout the entire process of conflict prevention in order to build a favourable global environment for conflict prevention. It is necessary to coordinate and maintain security in conventional and non-conventional fields. We must advance sustainable security with sustainable development in order to eliminate the root causes of conflicts.

Secondly, we feel that disputes among countries need to be addressed appropriately through dialogue and consultation. All countries need to abide by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and follow the basic norms governing international relations, such as respect for the principles of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of nations, non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes. It is important to insist on good-neighbourly relations, advocate inclusiveness and cooperation and effectively manage differences and conflicts in order to resolve disputes through peaceful means, such as dialogue and consultation. The goal of conflict prevention is to realize peace. Any non-peaceful means are undesirable.

Thirdly, we are committed to addressing the root causes of conflicts. Conflicts have many deep root causes, such as extreme poverty, unbalanced development, shortage of resources and ethnic and tribal conflicts. Conflict prevention needs to take into account the root causes of conflict. All countries should make development their top priority and jointly forge ahead with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to realize the goal of eliminating poverty from the world at an early date and build capacities for autonomous development in order to provide impetus for conflict prevention.

The international community should fully respect the wills of the countries involved and resolve conflicts, with the countries involved taking the lead. The international community should provide constructive assistance in the process of political and national reconciliation. We need to make greater efforts to promote civilizational and cultural exchanges that are diverse, harmonious, inclusive and all-embracing. We need to carry out dialogue and enhance mutual understanding in order to turn differences into driving forces for exchange and integration, rather than leave them as potential causes for conflict.

In areas plagued by armed conflicts, the threat of terrorism is especially acute. The international community should strengthen the unified global counter-terrorism front and prioritize counter-terrorism cooperation on the international security agenda. Special measures need to be taken in order to prevent the erosion of peoples' minds by the ideologies of terrorism and extremism, thereby eliminating breeding grounds for terrorism.

Fourthly, we need to give full responsibility to regional and subregional organizations, as they have geographical, historical and cultural advantages. They know the regional circumstances and specific causes of conflicts best. The international community should support regional and subregional organizations in capitalizing on their advantages in order to make greater contributions to conflict prevention in those regions.

In recent years, African regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, have been committed to the joint self-development and improvement of African countries, and have actively carried out activities related to conflict prevention and pushed for African solutions to African issues. They have played a very active role in safeguarding peace and stability on the African continent. The United Nations should further strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, and provide more targeted assistance so as to allow them to play a greater and more unique role in dialogue, consultation, good offices and mediation to address the hotspot issues in Africa.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I appreciate and commend the leadership of the United States in convening today's

meeting. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his impactful remarks.

The three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, sustainable development and human rights — are not independent of each other. That is no less true with regard to the relationship between human rights and international peace and security. In fact, the Security Council has already been discussing and taking action on human rights in various regional situations, as well as on many cross-cutting issues. Therefore, we welcome the fact that the Security Council has rightly decided to have a briefing under this theme in order to foster a comprehensive discussion on the nexus between the two pillars.

The international community has seen many cases in the past, as in Rwanda and Bosnia, and today in Syria, where a dire human rights and humanitarian situation destabilizes the surrounding region. In too many cases, people face being abused or brutally killed because of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. The escalation of such attacks, retaliation and conflicts may even lead to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

We have also seen the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where authorities pursue the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles at the cost of the fundamental human needs and welfare of the people in its territory. In addition, with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its abduction of foreign nationals is a grave human rights violation. At the same time, it undermines the sovereignty of the countries concerned and threatens the lives and safety of their citizens.

Such deliberate human rights violations as a method to threaten international peace and security can also be seen in other places. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram use human rights abuses — such as abduction, rape and human trafficking — as tactics of combat. Those examples remind us that the discussion of serious human rights violations falls within the mandate of the Security Council as long as they may affect international peace and security. Whether such a linkage exists in a particular case or not can also be discussed in the Council.

Discussions mean nothing unless they lead to a positive change towards a stabilized world in which each person's human rights are protected. In that regard, it is the obligation of the Security Council to make full use of the options that the Council possesses. Currently, more than half of the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions have human rights-related mandates. Since, regrettably, human rights abuses often occur in unstable contexts and they also become root causes of destabilization, certain situations compel us to integrate human rights components into peace operations.

The Security Council could also utilize various mechanisms outside the Council, especially those of the Human Rights Council, in order to acquire sufficient information for making appropriate decisions related to preventing and ending conflict and atrocity. With that in mind, Japan joined the appeal of 13 June 2016, entitled "To Put Human Rights at the Heart of Conflict Prevention", during the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council, and we support the recommendation made therein to intensify the exchange between the two Councils.

Most of the conflicts that we are facing today are not classical wars between sovereign States. Most of them are asymmetrical conflicts driven by non-State actors. In such cases, the risk that civilians will become victims of atrocities and atrocious attacks is significantly higher than in inter-State wars. Today, we are also facing cases where systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have become essential components of political systems and, though not comprising active conflicts, such systems pose serious threats to regional stability.

Under such circumstances, focusing on human rights aspects is essential to seeing the overall picture of a threat or conflict. It is the responsibility of the security Council to decide whether or not certain cases of human rights violations pose a threat to international peace and security, and, if so, to decide how the international community should respond.

The President: The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

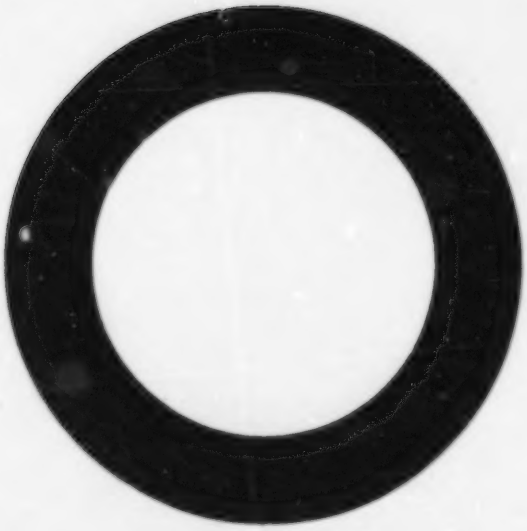
Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Once again, the Russian delegation referred to Crimea as if it were its own, in outright contravention of General Assembly resolution 68/262, thereby directly insulting at least 100 States Members of the United Nations that voted in its favour, as well as resolution 71/205, which was loud and clear in recognizing Russia as the occupying Power in Crimea.

Today, I listened carefully to the Russian representative and heard no intention whatsoever to cooperate with the United Nations Human Rights

Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. If the situation is as rosy as it is presented by the Russian delegation, why is the Russian Federation so afraid of allowing the Monitoring Mission to enter the peninsula? Today's assertions by the representative of the Russian Federation on the situation in Ukraine suggests that all States Members of the United Nations should carefully read all of the reports by the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine that we mentioned in our statement. Read them in their entirety and do not resort to cherry-picking and manipulating them as the Russian Federation continues to do.

In conclusion, while rejecting each and every point made by the Russian delegation on Ukraine, I must still acknowledge that there is hardly any better illustration than the Russian delegation's intervention on how dramatically the Russian Federation departed from the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Perhaps, that is because it is one of the youngest Members of the United Nations and, unlike Ukraine, it did not draft the Charter.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.



United Nations S/PV.7927

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7927th meeting
Wednesday, 19 April 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2017/283)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-10460 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2017/283)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/283, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Kobler and Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

Mr. Kobler: At the outset, I would like to congratulate the United States of America on presiding over the Security Council this month.

Members of the Council have received the latest report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2017/283). However, in my remarks, I would like to concentrate on some strategic lines and to provide recommendations for consideration by the Council.

Today, it is more important than ever to forge unity within Libya. Prior to the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement in Skhirat in 2015, Libya was a deeply divided country. The broad endorsement of the Libyan Political Agreement by Libyan stakeholders, signed with hope and confidence on 17 December 2015, continues today. The international community also continues to strongly support the Agreement and its institutions, and recognizes the Presidency Council as the sole national executive authority. The statements of the P-5 ambassadors to Libya and the political support and engagement of neighbouring countries, as well as the formation of a quartet comprised of the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union and the United Nations, are tangible reflections of international cohesion and commitment. We all share the same vision. We all share the same road map.

Libyans and the international community alike support the Agreement. Yes, it can be amended, but there is no alternative. There is no plan B. Moreover, there is no need for one. If the parties do not uphold their responsibilities under the Libyan Political Agreement, there is no reason to think that they will have any greater commitment to an alternative agreement.

There are positive signs elsewhere, too. The fight against terrorism is largely successful in Sirte and Benghazi. Da'esh no longer controls territory in Libya. That is a significant achievement as we move towards the end of the presence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Libya. The security situation in Tripoli is at least contained. Looking at the economy, oil production has increased and has potential for further growth. The National Oil Corporation has achieved much and demonstrates the need to maintain the unity of sovereign institutions. Budgetary resources have been released by the Central Bank of Libya, including salaries in all parts of the country.

Despite what I have said, we should be honest and see that the optimism and confidence of Skhirat has faded. Instead, I see frustration, disappointment and sometimes anger. Often they are justified. The sharp horizon established by the Libyan Political Agreement has blurred, and the path forward is no longer clear for many. Today, uncertainty has contributed to fragmentation and dissent, contributing to a dangerous political power vacuum. Violent clashes, social unrest and increasing criminality remain common in too many parts of Libya.

The institutions of the Libyan Political Agreement must deliver, if they are to maintain credibility and legitimacy. The divisions in many of the institutions have impacted their ability to govern. Instead of functioning for the good of the nation, many have begun to perceive the power-sharing agreements through the interests of one group over the other.

The results of those divisions are setting Libya down a worrying path. Public services, including access to electricity, health, education and water, are failing many. The economy continues to decline. The gross domestic product has lost over half of its value since 2012. The lack of liquidity prevents Libyans from accessing their salaries. The dinar is losing value. The shadow economy and rampant corruption are growing.

Political divisions also threaten the cohesiveness of sovereign financial institutions, such as the Central Bank, the National Oil Corporation and the Libyan Investment Authority. It is difficult to produce a realistic common budget for the whole of Libya. The political vacuum complicates efforts to create a united security force and has encouraged some to advocate for a military solution to the Libyan crisis. History does not tolerate a power vacuum. Armed groups are gaining power, and Libya is witnessing new and heightened violence. The gains made against terrorist groups, including in Benghazi and Sirte, will ultimately be lost, if some actors continue to strive for power at the expense of institutions and civil society.

The competition for the control of national resources will trigger renewed violence if the root causes are not addressed. The use of violence to obtain short-term objectives must end. It is time to get back to politics. It is time to address the core issues, and it is time to get back to the spirit of Skhirat. Having worked on Libya since the signature of the Libyan Political Agreement, I am convinced that Libya will not solve its problems alone. It needs the strong, united, consistent, robust and concrete support of the international community; action and commitment, not merely papers and meetings and workshops; partnership, not interference; antibiotics, not aspirin. Please allow me to suggest seven brief points on the way forward for the Council's consideration.

First, the Libyan Political Agreement must remain the framework for a negotiated settlement. I am encouraged that all important stakeholders and the overwhelming majority of the Libyan population share that opinion. Let us build on that consensus. The Prime Minister and the President of the House of Representatives have both confirmed their commitment, as has the Commander of the Libyan National Army, Field Marshal Haftar, during our meeting last Thursday in Benghazi. The Head of the State Council has expressed his agreement, as have almost all representatives of significant institutions and constituencies. The Agreement is not perfect. There is a consensus that amendments are needed and that those amendments can only be done by the Libyans themselves. We are working to create a consensus on the mechanisms to enable the amendment. That process must be inclusive, and those deciding must have the capacity and commitment to implement their decisions.

Secondly, all security actors must refrain from any action that might trigger violence and escalation. The temperature in Libya must be lowered, if political discussions are to resume. Efforts to expand control through violence are short-sighted and counterproductive. I am particularly concerned about the developments in southern Libya, both military and humanitarian. The much neglected south just cannot take more. There will be no unity through violence. The parties need to step back and talk.

Thirdly, the security track aimed at stabilizing the situation and creating conditions for the formation of a unified security apparatus must be urgently reinvigorated. While progress on security is most effective when combined with advances on the political track, confidence-building steps must be taken immediately. The formation of a committee in Tripoli to supervise the ceasefire is a good basis on which to move forward with more structured security arrangements for the city and a means to strengthen the authority of the Presidency Council.

Fourthly, the economy and financial situation of the country needs to be stabilized. Agreement on a budget framework for 2017 was a significant step forward. However, budgetary and public-finance mechanisms must be improved in order to ensure unified and equitable financing of services and the economy, with funds distributed fairly and transparently to all regions of Libya. In that regard, I encourage a more constructive cooperation between Libya's financial and economic institutions and the Presidency Council.

Fifthly, national reconciliation must be integrated decisively at all levels. The ability of Libyan leaders to mediate local ceasefires is a great asset and has prevented many sparks from creating fires. Libyans will soon start a comprehensive bottom-up national reconciliation initiative supported by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

Sixthly, public services, security and governance must start improving at the local levels. In a country with a legacy of weak national institutions, local authorities remain among the most respected and effective actors. We must support them. Democratically elected mayors

must be given authority, funds and responsibility. In that context, it is important that international partners be prepared to support the Presidency Council, if requested, and to deploy expertise, not only outside Libya, but also in Libya on the ground.

My seventh and last point is particularly important. It is my wish that the international community move beyond containment. The focus on the fight against terrorism and migration alone is not enough. Migration and terrorism are symptoms, not root causes.

I am grateful for the many initiatives and efforts of, in particular, neighbouring countries and regional organizations over the past weeks and months to bring political and military stakeholders closer together. Now, I believe it is time for the United Nations to take the lead again. The United Nations is uniquely placed in Libya. However, we need the united support of the Security Council and the wider international community. The women and men of Libya, its wise elders and its vibrant youth deserve a better life, and they deserve it now.

I would like, once again, to thank the Security Council for its unwavering support for my colleagues and myself. I thank Ambassador Skoog and the Council presidency, as well as all of the stakeholders all over Libya, for the cooperation they have extended throughout the country. I thank them for their support for the Libyan Political Agreement and for the opportunity and confidence that they have given all of us at UNSMIL to serve the people of Libya.

The President: I thank Mr. Kobler for his time, his leadership and the insight that he has provided today.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Skoog.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): My report is slightly more dry than the one we just heard, I am afraid.

In accordance with paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011), I have the duty to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established by the same resolution. The report covers the period from 7 December 2016 to 19 April 2017, during which time the Committee members dealt with various aspects of the sanctions regime via the silence procedure.

First, with regard to the arms embargo, during the period under review, the Committee approved a request for an exemption from the arms embargo submitted under paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011) by the Netherlands. The Committee also received two post-delivery notifications from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and from Malta, respectively, the latter having been submitted together with that of the European Union delegation. Those notifications were for items that have previously been exempted by the Committee under paragraph 13 (b) of resolution 2009 (2011) and paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011). The Committee further responded to three requests from Tunisia, Turkey and Greece for guidance on the scope and implementation of the arms embargo.

Concerning the assets freeze, the Committee has not yet concluded its consideration of a request by Switzerland for exemption, in accordance with paragraph 19 (b) of resolution 1970 (2011), in relation to the assets of the Libya Africa Investment Portfolio. The Committee had no objection to a notification submitted by the United Kingdom, under paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), in relation to the same listed identity. Regarding an exemption request received from Canada, pertaining to an asset owned by a listed individual, the Committee sought additional details prior to further consideration of the matter.

On the travel ban, during the period under review, the Committee approved an update to its fourth implementation assistance notice, which relates to the travel ban measure. Upon the request of Libya, the Committee also approved the extension of a travel ban waiver for a listed individual who is currently undergoing medical treatment in Egypt until 23 August.

On the subject of communication with Libya, I would also like to mention that the Committee has sought information from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations concerning the officials authorized to sign off on documentation relating to any future arms embargo exemption requests, pursuant to paragraph 8 of resolution 2174 (2014). That was done as a follow-up to a recommendation made by the Panel Of Experts established pursuant to paragraph 24 of resolution 1973 (2011) in its interim report. The Committee has also shared with the Permanent Mission details concerning all previous arms embargo and assets freeze exemption requests considered by the Committee. Lastly, the Committee has also consulted with the Permanent Mission on the subject of oversight of certain Libyan public and financial institutions, also pursuant to a recommendation of the Panel.

Finally, the Committee received two letters from Malta concerning the activities of two vessels that

reportedly were illicitly attempting to export petroleum products and fuel from Libya to other destinations. The Committee has not yet completed its consideration of that matter.

The President: I thank Mr. Skoog for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Kobler and Mr. Skoog for their briefings.

At the outset, I ensure Mr. Kobler of the United Kingdom's full support of his work and reiterate its commitment to the Libyan Political Agreement — the sole framework for a political solution to the situation in Libya. Sadly, as he has made clear, its implementation remains mixed, at best. I very much agree with all seven points of hos seven-point agenda. As the penholder for Libya, we see three interlinked areas of concern: security, the economy and the political process.

In 2017, security has deteriorated significantly, particularly now in the South, where there are renewed escalating clashes, which are edging the country towards civil war. The United Kingdom condemns all such violence, as well as threats of military action and reports of gross human rights abuses by armed groups. Such acts have no place in the Libya of today, and we are clear that the military and other security structures need to be under civilian and political oversight. As the Ambassadors to Libya of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States said last week, there is a difference between acts against the terrorist threat and acts that can lead to further deterioration in Libya.

On tackling terrorism, it is important to recognize the defeat of Da'esh in Sirte, and I pay tribute to all involved and acknowledge the many lives lost in that effort. But in spite of that success, we are now faced with a threat that is dispersed across Libya. Those who continue to undermine effective governance in Libya are feeding the terrorist threat by creating ungoverned spaces. It is a threat that extends not only across Libya but across the region as a whole. Such ungoverned spaces create conditions for human trafficking and criminal networks to profit from the political and security vacuum in parts of Libya. Irregular migration can only be tackled properly by a strong and stable Government.

Turning to my second point, the economy also remains vulnerable to the volatile political and security situation. We need to see real improvements. The Presidency Council and the Central Bank must work cooperatively to address the liquidity crisis and ensure that public services like water and electricity are sustained throughout Ramadan. We need to see an end to parallel institutions undermining the Presidency Council. There has been some progress, including the dispersal of the budgets in the early months of 2017 and the economic dialogue on the detail of fiscal and monetary policy now taking place in Tripoli, but it is clear that more steps are needed.

Throughout, it is crucial that Libya's oil resources remain neutral and be used to benefit the whole country. The continued unity of the National Oil Corporation is essential to ensuring that revenues be used for the national good. We call for much-needed investment in the maintenance of oil infrastructure to help increase national exports and reduce the drain on the economy.

Turning to my final point, the common thread in both the security and the economic situations is, of course, the political process, but I am pleased to reiterate here in the Chamber the United Kingdom's continued support for the Presidency Council and the Government Of National Accord, headed by Prime Minister Serraj, as the legitimate executive authorities under the Libyan Political Agreement, in line with resolution 2259 (2015).

But as the security and economic instability illustrate, Libya needs urgent progress towards full political reconciliation now more than ever. We support early signs of progress to bridge political differences, including regional efforts within the framework of the United Nations-led political process and reengagement by Libya's legitimate institutions, the House Of Representatives and the High State Council, with preparations for dialogue.

We have a difficult and long road ahead, so we urge all parties to commit to progress. We underline our firm opposition to any attempt to disrupt the political process. All those who have a role to play, including those still outside the Libyan Political Agreement, must engage constructively and in the spirit of compromise. The international community, as Mr. Kobler reminded us, must continue to support them.

We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to Libya as one of his personal priorities, and we reiterate our full support for the central role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in advancing the political process in Libya. As the penholder on

this issue in the Council, we will carry on playing our part. We will continue to monitor the situation in Libya closely. We will support all efforts to reach a more inclusive political settlement within the framework of Libyan Political Agreement and we will work with the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord in their efforts to serve the people of Libya, because the continued support of the Security Council and the wider international community will remain vital if we are to secure a better future for all Libyans.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Ambassador Skoog, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, and Mr. Martin Kobler for their valuable briefings today. I would also like to thank Mr. Kobler for his tireless efforts, along with those of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to restore stability to our brothers in Libya.

We highlight the efforts made by Egypt over the past few months to provide the necessary support to enable our brothers in Libya to reach a settlement based on the Libyan Political Agreement, re-establish stability in the country and restore Libya's natural status in the Arab world, Africa and the international community. Our efforts to bring our Libyan brothers together have always relied on the historical link between the peoples of Libya and Egypt.

The dialogue sponsored by Egypt has continued with the participation of all the Libyan national factions in the east, west and south of the country, with the participation of all legitimate institutions under the Libyan political agreement. One of the most important results of that dialogue is the creation of a dialogue committee to discuss amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement, including to the provisions regarding the supreme command of the Libyan National Army and other issues that have hindered the implementation of that agreement. Such a committee would comprise 30 members, designated by the House of Representatives and the High State Council.

In order for this endeavour to be successful, all Libyan parties must show the necessary political will and ability to assume the responsibility of choosing members of the proposed committee. They must also show flexibility if they are to facilitate the work of the committee, keeping in mind the best interests of the country. If this endeavour is to be successful, international and regional support is also absolutely necessary. In that regard, we would like to express our appreciation for the constructive efforts of Algeria and Tunisia and other regional efforts undertaken through the mechanism set up by Libya's neighbours, which held its most recent meeting in Cairo, as well as the efforts of the League of Arab States and the African Union.

At a time when Egypt is seeking to establish the necessary conditions for distancing the Libyan political dialogue from narrow interests fuelled by certain regional parties, these same regional parties known to all continue to play a subversive role in Libya. A clear example of this situation is the recent attack by extremist elements on the oil crescent area of the country in March, at a time when the Libyan parties were preparing to launch a dialogue based on the agreements reached in Cairo. This attack came after the Libyan National Army had been able to place the oil facilities under the authority of the National Oil Corporation for the benefit of all Libyans. These subversive actions against Libya are clear and explicit, and the Security Council must assume its role and compel all these subversive regional powers to rethink their positions and avoid any manipulation of the resources of the Libyan people and of the region.

Occasional instability in the capital, Tripoli, shows the dangers of allowing militias to blackmail and terrorize Libyan civilians. Egypt believes that international efforts should focus on supporting the construction of professional-calibre national security institutions. Egypt believes that the Libyan National Army should be at the heart of any unified Libyan armed forces under the supervision of elected civilian authorities. The National Army has proven its patriotism more than once, whether by successfully combating terrorists in the eastern part of the country or by ensuring the return of oil facilities to the authority of the National Oil Corporation.

It goes without saying that in order to eliminate the terrorism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other groups posing a threat to Libya, a genuine national effort must be carried out, and we believe that the Libyan National Army is in the best position to fulfil such a role. Therefore, the international community must recognize that in order to eliminate the dangers of terrorism and organized crime originating from Libya, the highest degree of support must be provided to the Army as soon as possible.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Kobler, for his very illuminating briefing, for his tireless commitment and for the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2017/283).

For my part, I will discuss the security, political and economic situation in Libya, which we consider to be a cause for concern, and propose some possible lines of action towards which I believe we are converging collectively and which we must urgently implement.

From a security point of view, we are particularly concerned about the developments taking place in the south of the country, while major progress had been made elsewhere. In Tripoli, the Government of National Accord contributed to the adoption of a globally respected ceasefire and is setting up security institutions, including the Presidential Guard, which France is helping to train. These efforts, in conjunction with the United Nations and the European Union, are essential to protecting the institutions and the people of Libya. Libyan forces have also made significant progress in the fight against terrorism, particularly in Sirte and Benghazi.

On the other hand, for several weeks now, skirmishes among Libyan armed groups, fighting each other instead of uniting against terrorism, confirm the dangerous temptation to take up the military solution. Shows of strength lead only to political deadlock and chaos in terms of security, creating fertile soil for the resurgence of terrorism. Reckless armed offensives, such as those which took place recently in Sabha, in southern Libya, could only cause things to boil over, thereby endangering the political process. This escalation must cease immediately to allow for dialogue and national reconciliation, and it is our urgent responsibility to so inform the Libyan parties. In this respect, the role of Libya's neighbouring countries is invaluable in achieving a return to peace. We welcome in particular the efforts of Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia.

At the political level, a consensus is emerging around amending elements of the Libyan Political Agreement in order to make the institutions more effective and more representative, which is a step in the right direction. However, several obstacles remain. The Government of National Accord, which was the result of the Skhirat Agreement, which we all recognize, regularly finds itself in difficulty. The Parliament, which today draws its legitimacy from this inter-Libyan political agreement, seems to be constrained in its efforts to promote dialogue. France denounces actions aimed at undermining institutions that were established based on the Skhirat Agreement, which reduce the chances of getting out of the political impasse. In this context, we fully support the work of the United Nations to mediate between Libyans and to coordinate all regional and international initiatives. We welcome the integration of the European Union into the troika, which has now become the quartet.

Finally, on the economic side, progress has been made with the adoption of the 2017 budget by the Government of National Accord, but certain developments call for the utmost vigilance. The National Oil Corporation, the only recognized actor in the field, is threatened in its full exploitation of oil under the supervision of the Government of National Accord and is torn between the various factions of power. Relations between the Central Bank and the Government of National Accord remain tense, although the so-called economic dialogue is working to smooth things out. It is essential to preserve economic and financial institutions and ensure that they operate under the control of the Government. Oil money must be for building the State, for the sake of the Libyan people and its prosperity; it is not for financing a war economy or trafficking of any kind.

Furthermore, I would like to echo the Secretary-General's report in denouncing human trafficking in Libya. We call on the Libyan authorities to do their utmost to ensure that migrants are treated with dignity on Libyan soil. This is a priority with respect to the protection and promotion of human rights and the fight against organized crime. In this context, we have to ask, how do we get out of this crisis? A reaffirmed commitment on the part of the international community is essential, urgent and based on three complementary concepts.

First, as we have repeatedly affirmed, the solution to the Libyan conflict can only be a political one. Let us remember that the logic of the Skhirat Agreement is based on an agreement among Libyan political forces, excluding terrorists, around a new model of the distribution of power. It is therefore a choice in favour of dialogue and the refusal to use weapons. In this context, those who use weapons rather than dialogue and who undermine any hope of stabilization and peace must be identified.

We must therefore reaffirm our collective support, under United Nations auspices, for the collaborative review of the Libyan Political Agreement. Accordingly, we encourage dialogue between the Presidential Council, the Parliament of Tobruk and the High State Council so that each body can find its place. We come together around this table on this point and we are increasingly doing so, I believe. Neighbouring countries, particularly Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia, are stepping up their efforts to reach a political compromise in support of United Nations mediation. Once again, we commend those important efforts.

Secondly, it is incumbent on the Council to ensure the maintenance, effective enforcement and strengthening of the Council's mechanisms pertaining to the arms embargo, which we have established, and to combating the illegal exportation of oil pursuant to the resolutions, which we have adopted. In that regard, I must thank the Swedish chairmanship of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. Libya's oil resources must remain under the exclusive control of the Government of National Accord and the National Oil Corporation of Tripoli, for the benefit of all Libyans. We must show collective resolve in ensuring the prevention of all forms of the illegal export of oil. We welcome the decision of the Presidency Council to appoint the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of National Accord, Mr. Mohamed Siala, as Libya's focal point for requesting exemptions from the embargo for the benefit of that Government.

Thirdly and finally, the Security Council must exercise all of its authority in the matter to encourage the Libyans to get along. In that regard, I vigorously commend the work of the Special Representative and encourage the work of the United Nations and the Secretary-General with regard to this issue, which are essential to revitalizing the political process and coordinating diplomatic efforts. Given the scale of the current challenges, the unity of the international community and the leading role of the United Nations, accompanied by new proposals, are more necessary than ever. The moment has come for renewed and strengthened commitment, which has taken on urgency, by the United Nations while we assume together our responsibilities.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would like to thank the Special Representative for his comprehensive briefing and continuous efforts in Libya.

Italy remains at the forefront of international support for the Libyan people, the institutions validated by Libyan Political Agreement in Skhirat and the mediation role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We are committed to the full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, while at the same time promoting reconciliation and inclusiveness.

My first point concerns the political and security track. Cohesive support from the international community is key to consolidating the results attained thus far so as to fight terrorism and achieve stability. Our message should therefore be very clear. First, the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord, headed by Prime Minister Serraj, remain the sole legitimate executive authorities of Libya pursuant to resolution to 2259 (2015). Furthermore, we intend to support them as vigorously as ever in their crucial role in combating terrorism.

Secondly, we encourage initiatives aimed at consolidating the Skhirat framework and improving it where possible through finding workable solutions to outstanding issues, including strengthening inclusivity within the Libyan Political Agreement framework.

Thirdly, we promote the cooperation of the Presidency Council with all legitimate Libyan institutions to broaden its base of support and achieve a sustainable political settlement. There is no military solution to Libya's problems. A solution can be achieved only through inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation. We reject any attempt to use force to acquire political and territorial gains, and we emphasize the difference between acts against terrorist threats and those that can lead to the further deterioration of the situation in Libya.

We are following with concern the recent violence in the south and the area of Sabha. We call for full de-escalation and avoiding provocative actions. We welcome the ongoing efforts of neighbouring countries and regional organizations. Cohesive and coordinated international efforts to support the United Nations-mediated political process can foster a constructive attitude for the Libyan stakeholders towards fully implementing the Libyan Political Agreement.

Moreover, with regard to efforts aimed at reconciliation, we need to consolidate the progress achieved thus far by the country in very challenging circumstances. We have enhanced our capacity to reach out to the Libyan people and communities in

the entire country through our embassy in Tripoli. We deem it crucial to promote stability through engagement with all Libyan parties. We are regularly reaching out to the east and actively promoting dialogue and mutual understanding with key political and security figures, including General Haftar. We are encouraging a constructive approach including on the crucial issue of implementing the formal security setup outlined in the Libyan Political Agreement with unified and strengthened national security forces under civilian oversight.

In that regard, we echo the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/283) in welcoming progress on the formation of the Presidential Guard. We are also stepping up our humanitarian help in coordination with the Presidency Council, for example by offering medical treatment in Italy to injured Libyans, including those from the east who were involved in combating terrorism. We are also planning to step up our diplomatic presence in the east with a consulate and visa office in Tobruk.

We are also focusing on the south of Libya, another key strategic area of the country. We have repeatedly provided emergency aid to those fragile communities, and we are promoting initiatives to enhance dialogue with local municipalities. On 31 March, representatives of the Tebu and Awlad Sulayman tribes signed an agreement in Rome aimed at fostering reconciliation, combating terrorism and countering human trafficking. Tuareg representatives and Libya's Deputy Prime Minister representing the Presidency Council attended the ceremony in Rome.

Fourthly, concerning the economy, we remain concerned about the latest developments with regard to oil infrastructure. As new sparks of tensions rise, it is crucial to reiterate our support to the mandate of the National Oil Corporation, acting under the authority of the Presidency Council to manage the oil infrastructure, resources and revenues for the benefit of all Libyans in line with the Libyan Political Agreement. We support the Libyan economic dialogue to encourage cooperation between the Presidency Council, the Government of National Accord and the Central Bank of Libya. For the first time in years, the Government now has a budget to implement initiatives for the good of the Libyan people. We now call on the Government of National Accord and the Libyan Central Bank to stay the course and implement their agreement so as to keep the economy functioning and ensure that the necessary funds for Government activities bring the budget under control and end the liquidity crisis.

My last point concerns migration. We reiterate our concern about the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking that has endangered the lives of thousands of people in the Mediterranean Sea. In its efforts to combine security, solidarity and development, Italy remains committed to rescuing people at sea and helping migrants from the south to reach our shores. During Easter weekend alone, 8,500 people were rescued. But a stronger and shared effort is needed to enhance the capacity of the Libyan authorities to disrupt criminal networks that exploit illegal migration flows.

Through its leadership role in Operation Sophia of the European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean, Italy is therefore working in partnership with Libya to jointly address that common challenge, thereby fostering cooperation in the area of the prevention of illegal immigration, human trafficking, smuggling and border security, based on a comprehensive approach. We believe that it is a key step towards better managing migration flows, which would also sustain the stability of Libya, its neighbouring countries and the Mediterranean in general.

In conclusion, we can see that it is particularly important for the Libyans themselves to hear from the Council that we share the desire for a secure, democratic, prosperous and unified Libya in which the State authority and the rule of law prevail. That is indeed our challenge — to not let the Libyan people and institutions down while we facilitate their return to stability and prosperity and stand by their side in combating terrorism and criminal gangs of smugglers of human beings.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Special Representative, Martin Kobler, for his briefing and for his ongoing efforts and those of his team in a particularly difficult context. We would like also to thank Ambassador Olof Skoog for his report on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

We take note with satisfaction of the near-normalization of the payment of salaries in the country and the recent successes achieved in the combat against terrorism.

However, more than a year after the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement, we continue to see a lack of meaningful progress in the political transition process following the formation of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord. The support that the Government has received within the Libyan political system has been minimal, which hinders the possibility of stabilizing the country in the short run and bringing it back onto the path of normality, as well as that of providing basic services for the people and ensuring their security.

The painful reality is that the authority of the Government barely extends beyond the buildings in which it is working in Tripoli. Paradoxically, the Political Agreement and the Government of National Accord have received more support from the international community than they have from within their country. It is essential that the new Government garner broader support among the population so as to achieve full legitimacy. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for it to ever govern the country or even the major part of its territory.

In the meantime, the violence and the fighting continue to spread; the dozens of militias on the ground are the ones who hold the true power in Libya. They are reaping benefits from the power that they do have and are working to further their economic interests in an attempt to control the oil business and the illegal traffic in migrants.

We are concerned at the fact that the deadline for the Tobruk House of Representatives' endorsement of the Libyan Political Agreement continues to be pushed back. A way should be found for this to take place and thereby leave aside once and for all a factor of institutional uncertainty and instability. To that end, every effort must made to achieve broad national reconciliation, taking account of the requests of and proposals by all parties. Today more than ever, dialogue is vital, as are negotiations. This is the only path to unity and stability.

In this context, the grave humanitarian situation of the Libyan people is worsening by the day, with more than 1 million people in need of urgent assistance. The situation of migrants for whom Libya is a country of origin and of those — the majority — for whom it is a country of transit to Europe, who are fleeing hunger, war and political crises on the African continent, remains a source of despair. On a daily basis, we witness tragic episodes that kill dozens or even hundreds of people, including women and children. Hundreds of thousands of people are currently in Libya waiting to try to cross the Mediterranean. They are subject to mistreatment and to the gravest violations of their human rights. We condemn the activities of the mafias that engage in the illegal trafficking of migrants, a business whose volume appears to be continuing to grow in Libya.

Just a few days ago, the International Organization for Migration announced the existence of a slave market in which sub-Saharan migrants are trafficked for a few hundred dollars. This cannot and should not be tolerated in any form in the twenty-first century.

Despite the measures adopted in 2016, the number of migrants who drown when their rickety boats sink continues to grow. For this reason, in considering solutions to this problem, priority should be given to the human rights of migrants and refugees. Only a stabilization of Libyan political institutions will make it possible to significantly reduce the number of occurrences of this phenomenon and to set up adequate and more effective controls.

I wish to reiterate our support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and for the role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and we encourage the Special Representative to continue with his work jointly with Prime Minister Serraj and the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord. This will be pivotal in order for the Government of National Accord to acquire legitimacy throughout the country and tackle urgently the tremendous challenges that Libya faces, which include the combat against terrorism and the severe humanitarian, economic and security crisis that is affecting millions of people.

Against this backdrop, we deem it important to exercise great care in drawing up the new mandate of the Mission. To do so, it will be important to conduct a strategic review of the Mission, as envisioned in resolution 2323 (2016), which we believe would represent a valuable opportunity to bring the presence of the United Nations in Libya into line with the political, operational and security realities on the ground.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to thank Mr. Martin Kobler for his briefing. Japan supports the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to promote peace and stability in Libya. I would like to thank also Olof Skoog for his briefing on the activities of the Security Council

Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

More than a year has passed since the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement, and we have seen little progress. The political situation remains fluid, but there is an emerging trend, as we have heard today, namely, a broad consensus among the Libyans to amend certain elements of the Agreement.

In this regard, the agreement in principle between the House of Representatives and the High State Council to form a joint committee to work together to amend the Agreement by consensus is a noteworthy development. Japan believes that a Libyan-led process that ensures broad, inclusive and genuine consultations among the Libyan people is a prerequisite for achieving enduring peace. Japan looks forward to seeing the joint committee formed in that spirit.

The Libyan Political Agreement has now been given another chance, and we must make the utmost effort to support the Libyan parties in setting the course for progress. In this regard, Japan appreciates the continued engagement of the relevant parties, including both regional and international parties.

Japan is concerned about the deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in Libya. This is the cost of the political stalemate. The international community cannot leave 1.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance suffering from unmet basic requirements such as medicine, water and food. To alleviate the suffering of the people, Japan will restart its economic assistance to Libya for the first time in three years. We will provide more than $4 million, including $1.4 million to the Stabilization Facility for Libya.

We also encourage the financial institutions in Libya to redouble their efforts to tackle the issue of funding and liquidity, so that the necessary services can be provided to the people in need.

The security situation remains precarious. The escalation of violence in Tripoli and the oil crescent is another cause of the political stalemate. The recent escalation in the southern region is of particular concern. It should be stressed that violence does not bring peace any closer. Japan urges the relevant parties to immediately stop acts of violence.

Japan continues to support the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord as the legitimate authority under the Libyan Political Agreement. The Agreement is the key instrument in moving the process forward, and its framework should be upheld. Japan encourages UNSMIL to make further efforts to facilitate the Libyan-led process to implement the Agreement, in accordance with its mediation and good-offices mandate under resolution 2323 (2016). Japan, for its part, will continue to engage constructively in order to support the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement and alleviate the suffering of the Libyan people.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank Special Representative Kobler and Ambassador Skoog for their briefings and commends them for their efforts.

There has been limited progress on the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, which was signed more than a year ago. The Libyan peace process is facing serious challenges. The political dialogue has run into major problems and the parties lack confidence. The security situation is fragile. Armed conflicts are escalating, the terrorist forces have still not been eradicated and arms proliferation continues to be a serious issue. China firmly supports Libya in its use of peaceful means to restore national security and stability, and commends all the Libyan stakeholders for their efforts to implement the Political Agreement. They should all work together with the aim of reversing the current negative trend and take proactive and effective measures to advance the peace process in Libya.

First, the only choice for a solution to the Libyan problem must be a political one. The Libyan political process should uphold the principle of Libyan ownership and leadership and an inclusive political dialogue should begin as soon as possible. All the parties should demonstrate sincerity and promote dialogue and negotiation in settling their differences. The relevant Security Council resolutions and the Libyan Political Agreement should serve as a foundation for finding a solution that is acceptable to all parties and will help to achieve national reconciliation.

Secondly, a ceasefire must be reached if the right conditions for restoring and maintaining the political dialogue are to be created. All Libyan stakeholders should exercise restraint and avoid resorting to force. They should put aside their differences, build mutual trust and cooperate in such areas as fighting terrorism

and protecting airfields, harbours and other critical economic infrastructure, in order to protect the interests of all Libyans.

Thirdly, the international community should provide constructive assistance, with the United Nations as the principal mediator. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya should conduct its work based on the mandate assigned to it by the Security Council. Regional organizations such as the League of Arab States and the African Union, as well as Libya's neighbours, should continue to promote peace, facilitate talks and encourage all parties in Libya to be flexible in dialogue and participate actively in national reconciliation efforts. The international community should respect Libya's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and increase support to it in order to help it strengthen its State governance and development capacities. China stands ready to work with the international community as a whole and to contribute to the restoration of State governance and the realization of peace, stability and development as soon as possible.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Martin Kobler for his briefing and his commendable and tireless efforts, which we greatly appreciate.

The briefing we just heard from him provides a sobering assessment of the situation in Libya. Despite the efforts to reinvigorate the political process, the security situation continues to worsen across the country. We are particularly concerned about the recent military escalation in southern Libya, as well as the recurring violent clashes in the capital, including attempts to take over Government infrastructure, and the fighting in the oil crescent. It is imperative that we not allow such developments to run the risk of returning the country to full-scale conflict. The consequences would be disastrous both for the people of Libya and the security of the entire region.

As documented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/283), the civilian population of Libya is clearly paying a staggeringly high price as a result of this conflict. Millions of people have been affected, with 300,000 currently displaced by insecurity and violence. Illegal flows of arms into the country prolong the conflict and increase civilian suffering. We would like to remind all United Nations members of their responsibility to fully implement the Libya sanctions, including the arms embargo. A breakdown in the rule of law has resulted in all parties to the conflict committing widespread human rights abuses and unacceptable violations of international humanitarian law, including against children. Those responsible should be held to account. The decision of the International Criminal Court to intensify its work on Libya is more relevant than ever.

The security vacuum has also had dire consequences for Libya's many refugees and migrants, as has been mentioned here this morning. We are alarmed by the reports of arbitrary detention and unsafe conditions in migrant detention centres. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to investigate the allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of women in those centres, and urge the parties to enable increased humanitarian access for international organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. As one of the 10 largest bilateral donors to Libya, Sweden stresses that all international assistance must be implemented in line with international law, including refugee law.

There is clearly no military solution to the conflict. The only viable way forward is through Libyan-led, United Nations-supported political negotiations based on the Libyan Political Agreement. The Security Council and the international community as a whole have a responsibility to come together in support of the Libyan Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord as the sole legitimate Government, in accordance with resolution 2259 (2015) and subsequent resolutions.

At the same time, we should be receptive to parties' calls for amendments to the Political Agreement that can ensure inclusivity. The Political Agreement's implementation should reflect the interests of all Libyans, women and men, and the whole of the country, including the South. It goes without saying that the details of any possible amendments are for the Libyan people to decide. We are encouraged by the parties' signs of increased willingness to engage in dialogue, as well as by the constructive support from neighbouring States and regional organizations. In that regard, we are happy to see the valuable inclusion of the European Union, Libya's neighbour and partner, in the quartet.

In order to respond to what we hope is an emerging readiness to move the process forward, the United

Nations must now urgently pursue a reinvigorated, broad and long-term approach to Libya. We are therefore encouraged by the Secretary-General's commitment to making Libya a priority for 2017. While reviewing its long-term approach, it is crucial that the United Nations remain fully engaged in the short term as well. It must be equipped to play a leading role, as Mr. Kobler said, in moving from containment to reinvigorating the political process in support of negotiations between the parties and coordinating international efforts. Time is of the essence.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank Special Representative Kobler and Ambassador Skoog for their comprehensive briefings. It is disappointing that no substantive progress has been reached in Libya since our last meeting in February (see S/PV.7879). Despite many efforts, the situation has become even more unpredictable, and there is a visible danger that the situation in Libya, on all fronts, could deteriorate even further. However, we continue to believe there are ways to prevent that. How can we achieve that?

First, we still believe firmly that the political deadlock in Libya must be resolved through compromise and finding a consensus solution. It requires getting the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, the House of Representatives and other Libyan actors engaged around a process that addresses the core issues that are obstacles to the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. We consider the political dialogue to be a good platform for a genuine discussion of this kind. In that regard, the main task of the United Nations should be to make sure that it talks to all parties and that the parties talk to each other as well.

The second and no less important point is ensuring the responsible engagement by those external actors capable of exercising influence to encourage the parties to sit around the negotiating table. It cannot be achieved by creating alliances of convenience but must be done by working in good faith based on an inclusive transition process. It is important to ensure the coherence of all efforts in a Libya-led process under the auspices of the United Nations.

Turning to security-related issues, my delegation strongly condemns the escalation of fighting in Sebha, the oil crescent, Jofra and other areas. The situation in Libya can have no military solution. We call on the parties to cease hostilities and join the negotiation process. Any delay in doing so will only result in greater suffering for the Libyan people. It is also worth noting that the volatile environment creates a fertile ground for the spread of terrorist activities. As we have learned from the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2017/283), after the liberation of Sirte, many fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant moved to the south, and some of them have formed sleeper cells. That underscores the urgency of establishing coordinated security policies on the ground and setting up unified security structures.

We believe that Libya can overcome its current threats if it returns to the path of development. Development requires good partners. We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General is committed to engage.

In that regard, we look forward to the results of a system-wide strategic assessment review that will examine the role and shape the priorities for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in both the short-term and the long-term.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): Let me start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Kobler, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Libya and the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We commend his efforts in the search for a political solution to the Libyan crisis. We also thank Ambassador Skoog for his report on the activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011). We appreciate his leadership.

The deteriorating security situation and the continuing political stalemate in Libya remain a source of great concern. With the prevailing lawlessness and the existence of parallel and divided institutions, the possibility of Libya sliding back into conflict presents a serious risk, as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/283) has warned. We believe that the Libyan Political Agreement is still the only framework for ensuring a lasting political solution to the Libyan crisis. The need for renewed efforts to facilitate political dialogue and address the key controversial issues that continue to impede the implementation of the Agreement has already been recognized, but it is now time for taking concrete actions in that regard.

It is undoubtedly the Libyans who should resolve their own problems. There is no alternative to Libyan ownership of the process of resolution. However, careful coordination of regional and international efforts in support of the Libyan peace process in full recognition

of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity is vital. In that connection, we acknowledge the key role played by the neighbouring countries of Libya. It is in that spirit that we welcome their intensified efforts to stabilize the situation in the country. We also support the decision of the African Union High-level Committee on Libya to include neighbouring countries as members, recognizing their indispensable role in addressing the crisis.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the efforts in support of Libya, it is imperative that there be enhanced coordination and coherence among all of the relevant regional and international stakeholders. In that context, we welcome the joint communiqué issued by the Libya quartet's meeting, held on 18 March in Cairo, which stressed the importance of a political solution. There can be no military solution to the conflict in Libya.

Finally, we remain concerned about the overall humanitarian situation in Libya, as well as the suffering and plight of refugees and migrants. Though the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has brought tangible progress, the continued presence of that group and its sleeper cells still poses a serious threat. All of that underscores the urgent need to reinvigorate the political dialogue in order to restore peace and stability in Libya. There is a need for unity of purpose within the international community in supporting and encouraging all Libyan actors to constructively and seriously engage in searching for a lasting solution to the Libyan crisis.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. Kobler and Mr. Skoog for their briefings.

We regret to note that, despite the efforts being made by the international community to resolve the internal political crisis in Libya, the situation is not improving. We are concerned that the fragmentation of the country and its public administration system are hindering the solution of the numerous problems that the country faces in the fields of security and socioeconomics. Libya is still painfully recovering from the impact of the political intervention of 2011.

The ongoing confrontation between Tripoli and Tobruk has led to an actual paralysis of the Government's administrative system. One of the latest alarm signals of general instability is the fighting in the area of the so-called oil crescent, as well as in the south of the country. Against the backdrop of the power vacuum, we have seen the presence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaeda, as well as the activities of local extremist groups. The problem of the spread of terrorism is especially urgent, given Libya's porous borders and the absence of centralized law-enforcement agencies. We are concerned that as a result of counter-terrorist actions, some militants have subsequently scattered to various corners of the country, which might lead to the formation of sleeper cells.

The negative impact of the situation in Libya is being felt in Europe, which has had to deal with the influx of illegal migrants trying to cross over to the European continent from Libyan territory. Similar problems include the aggravated problems of cross-border crime, arms smuggling and drug trafficking.

We see a potentially constructive role played by Libya's neighbours in suppressing such threats. We note the importance of the implementation of resolution 2259 (2015), which established the Libyan Political Agreement as the basis for the settlement of the conflict. Unfortunately, there has been almost no progress in implementing the Skhirat Agreement. The main tasks of the transition period have not been fulfilled. For example, the work on the text of the Constitution has not been completed, general elections have not been held, and as a result permanent bodies of power still need be formed. It is good that the Libyan parties have declared their readiness for dialogue, but additional efforts will be required in order to reach a clear understanding of the parameters of national reconciliation, including the formation of national authorities.

The Presidency Council in Tripoli cannot seriously expand the base of its support and become an institution of power trusted by broad sections of the population throughout the country. The capital is controlled by numerous armed groups and not all of them are loyal to the Presidency Council. The prospects for the establishment of the Presidential Guard are still unclear. Moreover, it is unclear how its formation connects with the key task of creating unified power structures. The membership of the Government of National Accord has not been endorsed by the House of Representatives, as required by the Skhirat Agreement.

The myriad interrelated problems dictate the urgent need for vigorous international support for the political process in Libya, which could reduce the likelihood of further negative development of the situation on the

ground. There is no alternative to continuing, under the auspices of the United Nations, to work painstakingly with the representatives of all major political forces, regions and tribal groups. It is necessary to help them overcome their internal disagreements and find mutually acceptable solutions to the remaining controversial issues. That work needs to be intensified and provided with specific ideas. We cannot leave anyone on the sidelines, as some Western countries have done with the introduction of unilateral sanctions. In that case, the gradual return to the country of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya must be strictly related to the security situation.

Libya should not allow room for unhealthy competition, which will only complicate the prospects for settlement. Therefore, we attach great importance to the consolidation of international efforts, including their important elements in forums such as the African Union, the League of Arab States and neighbouring countries of Libya. The development of a common position by regional forces would be very helpful, since a stable and secure Libya would meet their long-term interests. We look forward to continuing the work of the Rome format, with the participation of all interested parties. It would be wrong to allow its fragmentation and gradual demise.

One of the key areas that requires our attention is the promotion of the unification of power structures. At the same time, it would be a mistake to marginalize the Libyan National Army, since the Army could form the basis for future unified armed forces. A united Libyan National Army under central command could become a reliable recipient of international military assistance. Given the current uncertainty, we believe that it would be premature to start talking about the full or partial lifting of the arms embargo imposed on Libya by Security Council decision.

The fate of the country should be decided by the Libyans themselves. Trying to provide them with ready-made solutions is counterproductive. That said, at the heart of the Libyan political process should be the refusal of all parties involved to resolve the crisis through force. The only way out of the impasse must be found through joint efforts at the negotiating table.

We believe that it is a mistake for some capitals to support Tripoli against Tobruq. We should not pit one set of Libyans against another. That kind of one-sided policy has become a reason for the slow-down of the political process. We would like to hope that the many foreign military presences in Libya will not contribute to the further disintegration of the country and its institutions. The efforts of European countries to fight the illegal migration passing through Libyan territory and the measures they have taken to do so should not go further than their declared purposes.

Russia's position is consistent. Guided by the priority task of maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya, we have been working with all the power centres by encouraging them to overcome their differences. Given Libya's particular situation, it is the only proper approach.

In general, the international community faces the difficult task of preventing the country's disintegration and collapse. It is in our interests to ensure that Libya emerges from its protracted crisis as quickly as possible, that it re-emerges as a stable State, sustained by its strong institutions, a functional army and law-enforcement structure and that it can regain its status as an important player in the Middle East. A strong, lasting settlement would not only respond to the hopes and interests of the Libyans themselves, it would also have a salutary effect on the Middle East and North Africa in general. For that, we need coordinated action on the part of all interested parties, and we are ready for such cooperation.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. The Plurinational State of Bolivia is grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Mr. Martin Kobler, for his briefing. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Sweden, Ambassador Olof Skoog, for his briefing, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, and reiterate that he has the support of our delegation in his work.

We welcome the efforts to support the Libyan political process by both international and regional actors, including the African Union, the League of Arab States and Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria individually, and particularly their willingness to strengthen dialogue, while respecting Libya's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Nonetheless, we are deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in Libya.

According to UNSMIL's report, it has resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people and hundreds more injured between December 2016 and March. We should remind all the parties involved that the only solution to the conflict lies in the political transition that is already under way and must continue. We therefore urge them to put aside any belligerence or notion that weapons are the way to resolve this or any other conflict.

We are also concerned about the plight of internally displaced persons. According to the 18 April report of the International Organization for Migration, their numbers have now reached more than 290,000, owing to the constant clashes between the various armed groups. And we are very concerned about the worsening plight of refugees. According to a statement on 22 March by Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore at the thirty-fourth regular session of the Human Right Council,

> "[M]igrants in Libya continue to be held arbitrarily for indefinite periods with no due process guarantees, legal recourse or review. They commonly face inhuman conditions and horrific abuse. Often it is armed brigades who exert direct or indirect control over these centres, including official detention centres, meaning there is no effective protection against abuse".

In that regard, we urge the parties and armed actors to cease all violent attacks on innocent civilians who play no part in the conflict and to honour their obligations under international law.

We acknowledge and encourage the resolute efforts of the Government and the people of Libya to combat terrorism, while emphasizing that as areas are liberated, the humanitarian assistance that the people need can be correspondingly facilitated and guaranteed. We reiterate our firm condemnation of terrorism and all forms of political, social and economic violence as unjustifiable and criminal, regardless of their motivation and wherever, whenever and by whomever they are committed. We also encourage Libyan institutions and United Nations agencies and services such as the United Nations Mine Action Service to continue to make every effort to neutralize the improvised explosive devices that can still be found in areas that have been liberated from Da'esh and remain a threat to the life and physical well-being of civilians.

Finally, we welcome the fact that the Libyan Presidency Council has approved its budget framework for 2017. In that regard, we call on all parties concerned to be ready and willing to reach common ground and take the positive steps that can enable the Libyan Political Agreement to be implemented effectively, as an inclusive process designed and conducted to benefit the Libyan people. We also acknowledge the progress made on the Libyan Political Agreement and the assistance provided by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya during the reporting period. We stress that all efforts by the Security Council must be aimed at achieving a peaceful solution that is in the overall interest of the Libyan people and respects their rights. To that end, we would like to highlight three points. First, the Libyan State and its institutions must be strengthened. Secondly, Libya's natural resources must controlled and managed by Libyans and all profits from them should be used to benefit Libyans. Lastly, I would like to underscore the primacy of politics as the only way to resolve this and other conflicts.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to thank Mr. Martin Kobler for his briefing on the situation in Libya and for his continued efforts and those of the entire staff of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to ensure a successful political process there. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya can count on the firm support of the Senegalese delegation. We also support his seven recommendations, which, if implemented by all of the actors and parties involved, could help to secure a lasting political solution to the crisis in Libya. I would also like to commend Ambassador Olof Skoog for his briefing and his leadership as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

With regard to the current situation in Libya, which has been characterized by the continued worsening of the tragic plight of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons who fall victim to various criminal groups, we believe that the Secretary-General's comments in his most recent report on the situation in Libya (S/2017/283) were particularly timely when he stated that

> "there is a need for a comprehensive approach to address the root causes in the countries of origin that drive so many people to take this dangerous journey".

Indeed, the smuggling of and trafficking in human beings in Libya, including migrants, are among

the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that the parties to the conflict in Libya continue to commit, some of which may constitute crimes of war.

The case of women and girls is equally alarming, as they are subjected to conflict-related sexual violence, committed by the parties to the conflict in Libya, as well as by smugglers, traffickers, affiliates of Da'esh in Libya and other criminal groups. This happens even when girls and women are detained in formal and informal detention centres for irregular migrants. In the face of the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Libya, we remind all Libyan parties of their duty to protect civilians and of their obligation to respect and implement the provisions of International humanitarian law and human rights.

At the political level, my delegation would like to emphasize that the impasse in Libya does not allow for the stimulation of the country's already fragile economy. Of course, we are pleased that the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord has been able to draw up and implement the budget for the current year, and we call for improved collaboration with all Libyan financial institutions in order to better confront shortages of funds and liquidity, and to provide more services to the population. However, on the security front, my delegation regrets the recent fighting in the oil crescent and in the capital, Tripoli. We believe that the progress made in restoring oil production and exports could be compromised by the continuation of such clashes.

We are also concerned that Libya remains an enabling environment for terrorist group activities, despite the liberation of the cities of Sirte and Benghazi from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The presence of the ISIL in Libya shows the urgent need to establish strong and unified governmental institutions and security structures throughout the country in order to contain this threat.

The necessary unification of all military and security forces under the authority of the Government of National Accord is one of the main challenges of the Presidency Council, as the situation remains precarious throughout Libyan territory with consequences that are felt both nationally and regionally. Whether it concerns the plight of migrants in Libya, the fragile economic situation of the country, humanitarian or security challenges, my delegation remains convinced of the need to address them in the overall framework of the search for a political solution to the Libyan crisis. There can be no military solution, no matter where it comes from, to this conflict.

As such, like the majority of Libyan stakeholders and the international community, including the African Union, we support the Libyan Political Agreement, while taking note of the wish expressed widely by Libyans to amend it. We would therefore like to invite all Libyan parties to work to overcome their political differences through dialogue, which is the only way to preserve the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. That dialogue, of course, should be as inclusive and representative as possible and extended, in particular, to all tribes, women's groups and youth groups with a view to initiating a process of local and national reconciliation carried out by Libyans themselves, with the good offices of the United Nations. Issues that hamper the implementation of the Political Agreement at the executive and security levels should be high on the agenda of this dialogue.

My delegation hopes that, in the case of Libya, we will not lose sight of the principle that sanctions are a means of restoring peace and security and not an end in themselves.

Finally, while welcoming the ongoing efforts made by neighbouring countries and the quartet with regard to Libya, my delegation wishes to reiterate to the international community the appeal made by the African Union through its High-level Committee on Libya, calling for a better coordination of efforts in support of Libya, among the various countries and organizations concerned, and with all Libyan actors, with a view to advancing the political process for the restoration of peace and stability in Libya.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakstan): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Mr. Kobler, and Ambassador Olof Skoog for their briefings.

My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations. Kazakhstan reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya and its institutions under the Libyan Political Agreement, which must be Libyan led and Libyan owned. There is no military solution to the crisis. Rather, the solution involves inclusive

political dialogue, confidence-building measures and national reconciliation.

We commend the ongoing mediation efforts of the Special Representative, UNSMIL, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the European Union. Moreover, we fully endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations, which should be fully implemented in cooperation with regional actors, as well as neighbouring countries, including Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, to support the Libyan political process.

We express our deep concern over the renewed military escalation and the fragile security situation, which can undermine the political process and create a breeding ground for terrorist and violent extremist groups, including affiliates of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and Al-Qaida. What is necessary is to immediately focus on the largely unaddressed structural political issues and the multiplicity of armed actors on the group with conflicting agendas. Therefore, every effort must be made to build and strengthen State structures, the armed forces and the security sector, which will in turn enhance political stability.

Regarding the economy, the vulnerabilities of Libyan society can be overcome only with investments in sustainable development to ensure socioeconomic stability and meeting basic needs to support the political process.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Libya is in urgent need of our attention. Combating transnational crime, especially in illegal migration, human and drug trafficking, with the support of UNSMIL, the United nations system and other international partners, is equally critical, and we call for coordinated and comprehensive actions in that regard.

The Security Council should therefore play a more urgent and proactive role in the resolution of the Libyan issue, which must not be lost among other pressing crises. It is necessary to send a clear message to all parties for the immediate cessation of military operations, the de-escalation of tensions and engagement in political dialogue.

Finally, it is increasingly important that all countries fully implement all sanctions measures imposed by Security Council resolutions on Libya with regard to an arms embargo, the travel ban, the assets freeze and the illicit export of crude oil. Kazakhstan is ready to work with Council members in support of peace, security and stability in Libya.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States of America.

I want to thank again Mr. Kobler, as well as Ambassador Skoog, for their briefings and their insight.

The stakes for achieving stability in Libya are high. Heavily armed factions are fighting each other to control land and resources. Thousands of desperate migrants die every year after setting sail from Libya's shores. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other violent extremist groups are looking for safe havens in places that are beyond the Government's authority. The Libyan people are suffering. For too many Libyans, the promise of throwing off a brutal dictator has been replaced by the reality of harsh conditions and life under militias. The effects of that instability are spreading throughout North Africa and across the Mediterranean.

It does not have to be that way. If Libya's leaders can work together, Libya can, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, start to rebuild. That path starts with a national political reconciliation among Libya's parties. The status quo, with various officials all claiming to speak for the Libyan people, is not sustainable. It does nothing to re-establish the institutions and the security that the Libyan people crave.

The United States believes that the best way to resolve differences is through a Libyan-led dialogue with the support of the United Nations and the international community. All parties should immediately commit to that process. If the parties do not come together soon, Libya will only grow more dangerous and difficult to govern. That is an outcome that no party should want.

The Libyan Political Agreement remains the framework that Libyans have agreed on for their country's transition. It is the road map towards a democratic Libyan State — one in which all Libyans can have a say. Implementing the Agreement is vital to restoring stability. The United States welcomes indications of support from many parties for the Agreement. At the same time, we call on those who have not yet dedicated themselves to engaging in the process and ask them to do so immediately. There may need to be certain amendments to the Agreement, but the important point is that every Libyan faction needs to come together in a national dialogue and agree on how

to carry out its terms. Dialogue and compromise — that is what the United States urges the parties to engage in.

But some actors have pursued destabilizing military operations, while refusing to fully commit to finding political agreement. Violence on the ground has escalated in recent weeks. Conflict now looms at Tamehint airfield, where forces aligned with the United Nations-recognized Government were recently attacked by a rival group. Such destabilizing attacks are unacceptable. They must stop now. When Libya's factions keep fighting instead of talking, the biggest winners are the terrorist groups.

Libya's security cannot rest in the hands of various separate factions. The country deserves a national, unified military under civilian oversight. Moving forward in Libya requires building up such a force — one that is capable of securing the country. That is an extremely tough task. Libya's international parties need to be clear in pushing for a single Government security force.

Finally, the Libyan Government of National Accord must deliver for the country's people, but the Government cannot function unless it has control over the resources that provide its budget. Libya's oil wealth can help fund the restoration of public services, including policing and other security measures. The United Nations and Libya's international partners must help the Government of National Accord manage the country's resources, so that the Government can help ordinary Libyans with their everyday needs. That is why Libya's oil and petroleum industry must be safeguarded for the benefit of the country's people. When groups try to smuggle Libyan oil out of the country, they are smuggling away Libya's future. Those are funds that would otherwise help rebuild Libya's shattered economy. So, we in the Council need to take an unequivocal stand against oil smuggling from Libya in all of its forms. The international community must work closely with the Government of National Accord and the National Oil Corporation, which is based in the capital, to shut those rogue operations down. That is what the resolutions of the Security Council demand.

None of that will be easy. Libya faces an immensely challenging road ahead to rebuild its institutions and recover from years of civil war. The first step, though, is clear. Libya's leaders need to come together in support of a single Government and a single military. They need to talk through their differences, not fight them out, and they need to compromise. That is the message that each of us on the Council needs to bring to the parties. That is how we can one day stop talking about Libya as a threat to peace and security, and instead focus on the opportunities that Libya has to thrive.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to representative of Libya.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your presidency of the Security Council during this month. I would like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/283) on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Kobler, for his efforts to help the parties in Libya reach a compromise and for his important briefing on the most recent developments in Libya and Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, for his briefing in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

I would like to reiterate that the Government of National Accord supports all United Nations efforts aimed at achieving a solution to the political stalemate in Libya with a view to ensuring stability in the country and alleviating the suffering of its people. The ongoing political division and the deteriorating security conditions, in addition to a variety of difficult circumstances, undoubtedly cast a shadow over Libya at various levels and exacerbate the suffering of the Libyan people on a daily basis, despite the serious efforts by the Government of National Accord to salvage the situation and overcome the stalemate and the worsening difficulties. We reiterate the importance of reaching an inclusive political solution among the actors so as to put an end to the division in Libya, relying on the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement.

The threat of violence and force by any party can have only very negative consequences on the security and stability in the country. In that regard, we pay tribute to all of the initiatives and efforts of the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union, in addition to those of neighbouring and fraternal countries, for their efforts to mend the rift between the parties in Libya and to establish peace and security throughout the country. We hope that their constructive efforts will continue to address the political stalemate

and allow them to reach a compromise and minimize the tension among the various parties.

We also reiterate that the Libyan Political Agreement might need limited amendments, especially on the agreement of the political stakeholders. We do not think that that is impossible. It could be achieved by way of a constructive dialogue among the parties to the dispute. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the Libyan House of Representatives regarding the resumption of political dialogue. We consider that to be a very important step towards a final inclusive solution to the crisis in Libya.

Since the Libyan Political Agreement was signed on 17 December 2015, the Government of National Accord has faced and continues to face many challenges, but it has managed to take important steps aimed at delivering its citizens from their suffering, which are related to the country's socioeconomic and security problems. The Government operationalized the institutions of the country and adopted the 2017 budget, so as to be able to deliver basic services to its citizens, establish peace and combat terrorism, irregular and illegal migration and the smuggling of petroleum products. The Government of National Accord is also facing many challenges, and in that regard we commend the sacrifices and efforts made by all the people of Libya, especially in the two cities of Sirte and Benghazi — which have resulted in a lull in terrorist group activities. It is highly necessary in that respect to have a unified national army to work under the political leadership of the country and in accordance with globally recognized professional and military procedures.

In connection with the Presidential Guard, the Presidential Council is making ongoing efforts to set up the system, in coordination with the command of the Presidential Guard and Lieutenant-General Paolo Serra, the Senior Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on security sector matters. We call on the international community to support the system, exempt it from the weapons embargo and provide it with all of the important equipment that it needs to undertake its mission, which is to safeguard governmental institutions. We also call for the Libyan National Army to be exempted from the weapons embargo, so that it can uphold its counter-terrorism mission throughout Libya.

The unjustified and sudden military escalation around Tamanhint airport, which started with heavy artillery and aircraft strikes in recent days and resulted in heavy casualties and damage to facilities, has brought the country to the brink of civil war and may even have dealt a very strong blow to all of the de-escalation and settlement efforts for which we have been calling. Everyone knows that the targeting of those areas has nothing to do with the war against terrorism. We welcome the call issued by the ambassadors of the permanent five on 12 April for the de-escalation and immediate cessation of all hostilities. Nevertheless, the violations and land and air attacks continue. All of that notwithstanding, the Presidential Council has established a ministerial committee to de-escalate and minimize the tension, as mentioned in the letter by the head of the Presidential Council on 16 April to the international community, aimed at immediately urging those responsible for the escalation to cease their activities.

The human rights situation in Libya remains a cause for great concern, especially owing to the ongoing violations taking place for political reasons or for extortion and ransom, not to mention the suffering of civilians under the military operations and indiscriminate bombing, and the illegal migrants exposed to grave abuses. We reiterate that it will be difficult to address all of those issues unless stability is restored throughout the national territory and until we rid ourselves of the rampant armed groups. To that end, agreement must be reached between the Presidential Council and the House of Representatives, so that the Government of National Accord can undertake its mission, as required.

Based on the principle of national ownership, we call on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to cooperate and coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparing reports, especially some that are not included in the Mission's mandate — such as a report on illegal migrants in Libya. Indeed, illegal migrants transiting through Libyan territories suffer, and we therefore hope for future coordination with the Libyan authorities to address that issue. UNSMIL's positions should be reflected in writing instead of on Twitter, because tweets might inflame public opinion.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler to respond to comments.

Mr. Kobler: I am grateful for the solidarity expressed around the table in the Security Council. The

solidarity and cohesion of the Council is an important message. It is an important signal for those in Libya who seek procrastination and delay instead of progress and stability. I also appreciate the messages of support from my colleagues in particular, who increasingly work inside Libya on a daily basis in order to make life better for the Libyans.

I would like to comment briefly on the situation in the south, which is a matter of great concern for us. Many here have rightly said that there is a difference between the fight against terrorism and just taking an airport and achieving territorial gains. The humanitarian situation in the south, in Tamanhint and the town is, to say the least, very difficult. There are internally displaced persons, so any fighting aggravates the humanitarian situation, and people leave the areas where they reside. That is the case in Tamanhint. We try our best to not only politically urge interlocutors to stop the fighting but also to relieve the humanitarian situation. There is only one hospital left, and it has neither medicine nor equipment. We have tried to go there to advocate for allowing relief and humanitarian goods into the hospitals and the area.

Many have mentioned the situation in the detention centres, and I cannot but underline the importance of human security in Libya, which extends far beyond the detention centres. I bring to the Council's attention the situation in prisons, which was not mentioned. The situation for prisoners in Libya is not better than for those in the detention centres — with overcrowding and bad health conditions. It is the lack of accountability, the lack of State structure and the failure to restore the needed State authority throughout the country. We should not forget the many thousands who are subject to torture and arbitrary detention in Libya. The restitution of State authority is progressing. However, the situation in detention centres was duly noted. I personally try to go to those detention centres at least once a month, and I see the overcrowding, the health situation and the problems that the detainees face.

The solution is not only in the repressive means of closing the borders but also in the repatriation of those who are in the detention centres. The International Organization for Migration does a great deal to repatriate between 100 and 200 people every week to their countries of origin. But, given the thousands that are there, it is only a drop in the ocean of illegal migration.

I floated the idea with the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court as to whether it would be possible to consider human trafficking as a crime against humanity, given the thousands of people who have drowned and the irresponsible behaviour and the lack of accountability of human traffickers operating in Libya. I think that the relationship between human security, human rights for everybody and political security is obvious. I am very glad that the Council is also addressing that problem.

With respect to the illegal flow of arms, Libya has 20 million weapons. With a population of only 6 million people, that is really a problem. I always say, and I have said it to the Security Council in previous consultations: weapons come from somewhere — they do not just magically appear — they come by air, they come by sea, they come by land. Exports of illicit oil and diesel find their way to other countries through smuggling. I genuinely appreciate the Council's endeavour to block the illegal import of weapons and the smuggling routes, because it is very important to do it in a legal way via the United Nations Sanctions Committee, with exemptions if that is desirable, or through the lifting of the weapons embargo, but it is up to the Sanctions Committee to make the appropriate recommendation.

Let me conclude by going a bit beyond 2017 and 2018 in strategic terms. In 2050, Africa will have 2.4 billion inhabitants, nearly doubling its population size from 1.4 billion now to 2.4 billion, so it is easy to imagine what we can expect in terms of population movements, not in the short term, but in the medium and long term. However, Libya, a large country, will have only 9 million inhabitants in 2050. As a country that is large and rich, but does not have a sizeable population, Libya will be strategically facing large immigration waves early in the years 2030, 2040 and 2050.

I therefore think that we should reflect upon how we stabilize the country beyond the short term. It is important not to lose sight of a strategic vision for the future. Something dramatic has to happen if we are to be able to cope with the problem of 2.4 billion people in sub-Saharan Africa, 70 per cent of whom will be between the ages of 15 and 29. The so-called youth bulge and the youth problem, combined with enormous population growth, particularly in the Niger and Chad, Libya's direct neighbours, which will show enormous population growth of an order not shared by other countries, must be kept in mind, as we strategically think about the future. Human security, the strategic

lines of Libyan population growth and the youth bulge all over the continent are all topics that are important to consider.

I thank the Council members for their great support, for the solidarity they have been showing and for the important signal that this meeting has sent today to the Libyans themselves.

The President: I thank Mr. Kobler for his clarification and his comments. We understand that this solidarity is what he needs to push harder in his role, and we encourage him to continue moving in the right direction. We appreciate his efforts.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7928

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 April 2017

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7928th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 April 2017, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 19 April 2017, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7928th meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

"The President invited Ms. Kim Bolduc, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Ms. Bolduc.

"Members of the Council, Ms. Bolduc and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views."

17-06308 (E) 200417

Please recycle